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UNBELIEF

IN

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

AS CONTRASTED WITH ITS EARLIER AND LATER HISTORY

BEING THE

Cunningham Lectures for 1880

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PREFACE.

The author has to express his best thanks to the trustees of the Cunningham Lectures for the great honor they did him in associating his name with a lectureship which perpetuates one of the greatest memories in the Free Church and in Scottish theology, and which has gathered around it already so many works of lasting interest and value. It was from no lack or decay of ability, scholarship, and zeal, within her own borders, as every succeeding lecture shows, that the Free Church, in this case, went beyond them, but in the same enlarged and generous spirit which has marked her whole history. May this spirit be cherished and displayed on all sides; and then the visible unity of the branches of the Christian Church—a unity which transcends all remaining differences, however these may be severally regarded—will be one of the best replies to unbelief, and one of the greatest helps to the edification of the body of Christ.

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LECTURE I.

UNBELIEF OF THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES.

Contrast with Eighteenth Century.—First Contrast: Christianity then Claimed the Name of Religious Liberty; now Unbelief. — Second Contrast: Unbelief then Allied to Polytheism; now Separated from All Positive Religions. — Third Contrast: Unbelief then Acknowledged Scripture Books; now Denies Them.

The subject which I have chosen for these lectures is a part of the great history of the conflict between Christianity and Unbelief. That history is to a large extent still unwritten; and though some periods have received comparatively full treatment, others lie in shadow, while inferences and generalizations from the whole are as yet scanty and defective. It is with the hope of adding something, however little, to this literature, which, rightly considered, is the literature of faith, and a branch of Christian apologetics, that I have selected this topic; and, painful as much that arises in the study of it must be to Christian minds, it is not without that solid and enduring benefit which the struggles and reactions of error, historically considered, sooner or later bring to the side of truth.

I have chosen as the main theme of discussion the unbelief of the eighteenth century, because this period marks, in some sense, the culmination of unbelief in the history of Christianity, for it was then more widely diffused, and with less vigorous resistance, than before or since; it was more radical, in its antagonism, at least than in any former century; and it enjoyed certain extraordinary advantages, both of a social and political nature, which put all its alleged powers of remoulding the world to the test of a conspicuous and decisive experiment. What the first centuries are in the history of Christianity the eighteenth is in the history of unbelief, and hence its products and results are of the most typical and suggestive character.*

It would be impossible, however, within the limits of this

* See Appendix, Note A.

course, either to narrate the history or examine the literary and other developments of eighteenth-century unbelief, when surveyed by itself, with any measure of fulness. Hence I have sought to contract, without obscuring, the field, by introducing the element of relation to other periods. And as even this is too large, and would demand a longer inquiry than is possible into relations of connection and dependence as subsisting between the unbelief of that century and what preceded and followed, I have confined the point of observation to contrast, including, of course, comparison, but laying stress upon differences, rather than upon what belongs to unbelief in all places and in all ages. We thus obtain a perfectly definite subject, and one which, by presenting this important century in the light of other marking periods, may cast illustration on the whole history and genius of unbelief.

It needs only to be further premised that by Unbelief I mean unbelief in the divine origin and claims of Christianity. It will be necessary to speak of unbelief in God, in moral order, in future existence; but these are only considered as relative to, and associated with, unbelief in the Christian revelation; and the developments of atheism, pantheism, or absolute scepticism that are to be taken account of do not enter merely or chiefly as chapters in the history of speculation, but as bearing upon the resistance offered to Christianity.

Thus considered, the unbelief of the eighteenth century seems to me to require to be estimated in the light of the period before itself, and of that which comes after. We cannot suddenly descend upon it, without considering the post-Reformation history and tendencies, out of which it grew, which lie mainly in the seventeenth century. And as little can we abruptly leave it, without reviewing its fruits, consequences, and real or supposed advances beyond itself, in the century to which we ourselves belong. These foregoing and succeeding periods seem thus indispensable to a right and comprehensive estimate. But as there was an earlier unbelief in the world, largely different from any that succeeded, and yet bound to all later periods by the common attribute of rejection of Christianity—I mean the unbelief of the early centuries—it seems desirable not to exclude this from view; but as far as the great diversity of the grounds and principles of resistance allows, to exhibit this also in the series, and thus to introduce the earliest prototype of the eighteenth-century unbelief and of all besides.

Our plan then will be to sketch rapidly the unbelief of the first Christian centuries, noting especially such features as contrast with later manifestations; then to trace the rise and growth of the post-Reformation unbelief, especially in such forms as do not yet reach the eighteenth-century mark; then more fully to dwell on this central part of our subject in its various national and other peculiarities; and to close by showing to what extent and in what fields of conflict unbelief has altered its ground since its eighteenth-century utterances and conclusions.

Nothing, in many respects, can be less like the position of eighteenth-century writers—and we may take in seventeenth-century writers too—in opposing Christianity than that of its first antagonists. The principal points of contrast, as it seems to me, are these: *First*, that the deniers of Christianity in the early ages were on the defensive, and were defending a publicly held and settled religion, among other means, by force; whereas the unbelief of the eighteenth century was aggressive, hostile to all existing religious institutions, and professedly based on reason. *Secondly*, that the deniers of Christianity in the early ages made common cause with polytheism, and thus admitted the principle of a divine revelation, as well as the legitimacy of all its supernatural evidence; whereas the unbelief of the eighteenth century rejected every form of revealed religion, and made light of all supernatural evidence. And, *thirdly*, that the deniers of Christianity in the early ages granted, with hardly an exception, the genuineness and integrity of the Christian documents; while these, in the eighteenth century, were largely and strenuously disputed and denied. To the proof and illustration of these points the remainder of this lecture shall be devoted.

I. Our *first* point of contrast then is, that the unbelief of the first Christian centuries, unlike that of the eighteenth century, defended an accepted and publicly professed religion, and defended it, among other means, by force. When the Christian Church first came forth to secure by the struggle of nearly three centuries the unhindered expression of its faith and worship, it was not so much by any abstract theories of religious liberty as by the living strength of its conviction, which refused to be suppressed or falsified, that it overcame. But there

naturally grew up with a doctrine which so exalted the worth of every individual soul, and which demanded such stern resistance to idolatry or defection, a new conception of the rights of conscience, and an engrafting upon the literature of the world of new modes of expression for this hitherto unclaimed privilege. The Christian apologists, while pleading for the truth of Christianity, necessarily asserted the divinely given right of all truth to manifestation; and even from the lower level of its political innocence they contended for its free circulation and diffusion. Hence such great utterances as those of Tertullian in his appeal to Scapula, the Proconsul of Africa, "Humani juris et naturalis potestatis est unicuique, quod putaverit colere; nec alii obest aut prodest alterius religio. Sed nec religionis est cogere religionem" (cap. ii.); and also of Lactantius, "Quis enim tam insolens, tam elatus est, qui me vetet oculos in cælum tollere? quis imponat mihi necessitatem vel colendi quod nolim, vel quod velim non colendi." "Religio cogi non potest; verbis potius quam verberibus res agenda est, ut sit voluntas." * At length, as the result of innumerable appeals and incredible sufferings, this argument practically conquered, and in the Milan edict of the emperors Constantine and Licinius, in 313, the principle of a toleration, professedly wider than was needful for Christian uses, but really due to Christian struggles, was enunciated: "Etiam aliis religionis suæ vel observantiæ potestatem similiter apertam et liberam pro quiete temporis nostri, esse concessam, ut in colendo quod quisque delegerit, habeat liberam facultatem." † It is only too true that the early Church itself, lifted to a position of security and even of ascendency, forgot its own lessons, as we see in the case of a man like Eusebius, who, having described so pathetically the persecutions of the martyrs of Palestine, looks, ere his career ends, with complacency on the repressive measures of his great friend Constantine towards pagans and heretics. It is only when orthodox Christianity goes, as it were, into opposition under the Arian emperors, as under Julian, that it recovers its native language; and the lofty utterances of Athanasius recall the true relation of the gospel to liberty of conscience, though this is too soon buried and lost in the advancing tide of Cæsareo-papacy in the East, and of Roman absolutism in the West. The place of Christianity, as the parent of liberty of thought and the patron of individual con-

* "Div. Inst.," v. 13, 19. † Lact., "De Mort. Per.," 48.

science, had almost been forgotten when the Reformation came in, with struggles only second to those of the early Church, and not without something of the same inconsistencies and relapses, to reassert not only Christian truth, but the inseparable connection between that truth and freedom. When this movement had also spent its impulse, and Romanism, on the one hand, had guarded its territory so as to retain it fenced round with its old spiritual and secular terrors, and Protestantism, on the other, inheriting much of prescription, tradition, and *vis inertiæ* from the system it had dispossessed, was losing its hold over its precious store of truth, and maintaining it largely as an ancestral and state-defended institution, the unbelief that in these circumstances arose, as if in entire oblivion of the earlier creative work of Christianity in relation to free thought, took this as its own watchword, and claimed the honors of unfettered inquiry, of emancipated reason, and, as far it might be needed, of martyrdom. We find, to our surprise, the language of Tertullian and Lactantius starting up from an entirely opposite quarter, in the form of invective against superstition, priestcraft, and the brute and oppressive force of a relentless Christian despotism. This boast of mental liberty is common to all the schools of the eighteenth century,—to Collins, with his "Discourse on Freethinking" in 1713, near its beginning; to Voltaire, in his last visit to Paris in 1778, near its close, when he laid his hand on the head of the grandson of Benjamin Franklin and pronounced over him the words, "God, Liberty, Toleration;" and to Reimarus in Germany, whose first fragment, published by Lessing in 1774, had for its thesis and title "On the Toleration of Deists." It may be granted that the reaffirmation of the principles of religious liberty, though without the support of religious faith, wrought in some degree for good; and that once and again, as in the history of Voltaire, the victims of intolerance, especially of Romish intolerance, were earnestly and successfully befriended by the leaders and disciples of unbelief. Only it must be held that the solidity and depth of the appeal to the sacredness of truth and the rights of conscience generally bore no proportion to the loudness of the cry; otherwise there would not have been so widespread a disposition to assail Christianity in a masked and disguised fashion, and to escape the consequences of a frank confession of unbelief in reigning ideas, in a way which contrasts unspeakably with the openness and martyr-courage of the first Christian centuries. But with-

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out dwelling on this fact, or raising the question how far the watchword of liberty and independence of thought may have been genuine and useful, the point here chiefly to be noticed is, that the party of unbelief, throughout the early centuries, does not raise that cry at all, but stands upon tradition, upon established right, and, in the ultimate issue, upon blind force. These statements hardly need any formal proof, so much does the evidence of them lie on the surface. Pliny, in his letter to Trajan, does not doubt that in Christians, irrespective of any argument upon the merits of their faith, inflexible nonconformity to pagan worship was to be punished. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius carries his recoil from the obstinacy of the Christians to the length of more violent persecution. Nor does one of the formal writers against the Christian cause interpose any word of protest, but all leave these appeals to liberty of thought and rights of conscience entirely to Christian apologists. Thus Celsus, towards the close of his work against the Christians, as reported by Origen, in urging his appeal to fall in with pagan worship, grounded on the Homeric line which made the king the agent of Jupiter, thus argues: "If you break this precept, justly will the king punish you, for if all should follow you, nothing could save him from being deserted and alone, and the world from being given up to the most lawless and rude barbarians, with nothing left of your own worship or true wisdom among men."* So also Porphyry, who, in his letter to his wife, Marcella, insists much more on the spirituality of worship, does not rise above the sentiment that "it is the greatest fruit of piety to honor the divinity according to the religion of the country" (κατὰ τὰ πάτρια).† It may seem that in the Emperor Julian we at length find one who is tolerant on philosophical principles, or from general ideas of religious duty. But though the claim to set aside persecution is undoubtedly made by him, it comes too late, and is one of the things which, like his friend the philosopher Themistius, he had learned from the Christians, and learned without inwardly adopting. His whole career is an effort, not simply to persuade, but to bribe; and, where it could be done without bloodshed, to coerce his subjects back into paganism. His prohibition of Greek literature to his Christian subjects, his severities in exacting the rebuilding of pagan temples, his expulsion of Athanasius from Egypt, and

* "Contra Cels.," bk. viii. 68. † Cap. xviii.

his connivance at acts of sanguinary violence show how little his example can do to redeem the contrast here with later unbelief, and how much nearer his heart lay the maxim which he expresses in one of his letters, that "men might be cured against their will" (*ἄκοντας ἰᾶσθαι*).* Gibbon here gives up Julian, and condemns "the artful system by which he proposed to obtain the effects, without incurring the guilt or reproach, of persecution;" † and in this he is for once in harmony with Gregory Nazianzen, who represents Julian as so dividing the parts between himself and the pagan mob that he left to them the deeds of violence, and took on himself the work of persuasion.‡

II. The next point of difference, and one still more important, to which we now pass, which divides the unbelief of the early Christian centuries by a great gulf from that of the eighteenth century, is that in rejecting Christianity it made common cause with polytheism, and thus admitted a professed revelation and the general validity of all the arguments by which a revelation may be sustained; whereas the eighteenth century scouted all positive revelation, a polytheistic one in some respects more than all others, and denied all the evidence of every positive revelation whatever. This state of the case makes it wholly impossible that there should be any fundamental harmony between Collins and Tindal, between Voltaire and Diderot, on the one hand, and Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian on the other. They are habitually ranked together on the same roll of unbelief, but they differ almost as much as to their ultimate creed as these philosophers of the eighteenth century did from Hindoos or Buddhists, or from disciples of Zoroaster. There is nothing now extant in the world which represents that point of view of those non-Christian theologians of the first centuries, which Christianity has forever subverted, at least nothing but polytheism a great deal more rude and barbarous; but if it could have been perpetuated till last century, and if the English Deists and French Encyclopedists could have met its representatives fresh from the temples of Apollo and Minerva, and from the mysteries of Ceres, they would speedily have parted company after they had discovered that they had indeed a number of objections in common to Christianity; but that in regard to

* Ep. 42. † Vol. ii., p. 557, Bohn's edition.
‡ Greg. Naz., Op., vol. i., pp. 105, 106, 1st *στηλιτευτικὸς λόγος*.

their ultimate conclusions as to worship, and their point of departure as to the admissibility of a revelation, they were *toto cœlo* discordant. I humbly think that this is not sufficiently realized in our day, either by Christians or by those who stand on the other side; and while I am far from wishing to deny unbelievers the advantage of any coincidence they may have with earlier witnesses to the negative side of their creed, I shall endeavor to show here how limited, in the deepest sense, must be any concord that they can establish with the polytheistic unbelievers of the first centuries. Hence I shall endeavor, in regard to the latter, by testimonies of Christian writers or quotations from their own works, to show how genuinely polytheistic these unbelievers were; and, also, as a special point, how fully they conceded the admissibility of all Christian arguments for the supernatural, though, of course, they denied that these were cogent for Christianity in such a sense as to exclude paganism. It will be, however, remembered that this proof does not hold absolutely good of all antagonists of Christianity whatever. There was a section of the philosophers, always growing less and less influential, after the dawn of Christianity—the Epicureans and the Sceptics—who escaped polytheism by escaping all serious religion. But neither in numbers nor influence did they rank among the more considerable opponents of the gospel in its progress to victory; and hence they may, for present purposes, be disregarded—Lucian being the only one who might fall under this exception, while Celsus, though ranked by some as an Epicurean, has in him such Platonic affinities as to class him rather with Porphyry and Julian among the zealous upholders of paganism.

It would be wrong to charge the philosophic antagonists of Christianity with defending the vulgar polytheism exactly as it stood, with all its abominations and atrocities. They so far tried to make an approximation to the Christian apologists, who for nearly three centuries, from Justin Martyr to Augustine, assailed the popular system with such force alike of reasoning and of eloquence. We see where the more refined adherents of the pagan system took their ground, since almost every apologist, after having exposed the absurdities and horrors of the vulgar belief and practice, goes on to deal with the improved and extenuated forms of the same superstition, as philosophy alone would be responsible for it. These abatements, however, do not restore any harmony between the philosophical

unbelievers of the first centuries and those of the eighteenth, as we see that with every modification the polytheistic principle is still retained; that the attempts at improvement lead to other collisions with the views of later unbelief; and that in point of fact this later scheme has formally dissented from and thrown over the earlier combatant against Christianity. It is now time to make these allegations good.

First, The radical polytheism of the principal early assailants of the gospel cannot be denied. Thus, for example, Celsus lays down the characteristic principle of the existence of local gods, whom it was right for those parts of the world that had been assigned to them to worship. "Rightly," he says, "would things thus managed be done according to individual pleasure, and it would not be consistent with sanctity to break the usages thus fixed from the beginning by local settlement."* Thus Origen understands him, and argues that this justifies the sacrifice of strangers at the shrine of Diana in Tauris, and the Moloch-worship of Africa; and comes back in religion, as Celsus indeed admitted, to the maxim of Pindar, that custom was the queen of the world. It is upon the original appointment of the one Supreme God, no doubt, that Celsus founds the worship of inferior divinities or dæmons, arguing, to use his own words, that "the worshipper of more gods than one, in worshipping some one of those that belong to the Supreme, does in this what is pleasing to him;" it being understood "that it is not lawful to worship any one to whom he does not give the honor."† But Origen justly asks where this warrant is to be found; and Celsus, in applying his own rule, sinks to the lowest level of vulgar superstition, giving as an example of this distribution the assignment in Egypt of the care of six-and-thirty or more separate parts of the body to as many gods, whose names, as Celsus, without any sense of the ludicrous, has reproduced them in their Egyptian form, are, "Chnoumen, and Chnachoumen, and Knat, and Sikat, and Biou, and Erou," etc., by the pronouncing of which the disorders of the several bodily members were healed.‡

Similar evidence could be produced from the works of Porphyry, as preserved in fragments in Eusebius's "Gospel Preparation," and also in his own extant treatise on "Abstinence from Animals," in which, though there is a most laudable effort

* "Orig. Cels.," v. 25. † Ibid., viii. 2. ‡ Ibid., viii. 58.

to separate the rite of sacrifice from blood and cruelty, there is still an acceptance of a polytheist basis for his own scheme of faith. The closing sentence of his work on Abstinence sufficiently proves this, in which he speaks with sympathy of the old law of Attica "to honor the gods and national heroes by common worship, following the ancestral statutes, as each was able, with praise and gifts of fruit, and yearly meat-offerings;" nor is it easy to describe how far in the same work, as in his admiring account of the fasts and observances of the Egyptian priests, he descends to the grossest depths of ritualism, and to an acceptance of the whole Egyptian theosophy, founding beast-worship on the universal presence of God.*

As to Julian, it would be easy to prove the same points from his writings, but it is enough to appeal to his public utterances and acts. According to Cyril of Alexandria, in almost the last sentence of this father's long reply to him, he ascribed his elevation to the purple to omens, such as the voices of magpies and sparrows. Julian also lived in a perpetual round of sacrificial worship, his favorite god being Apollo, or the Sun. He tempted his Christian soldiers, as Gregory Nazianzen declares in his first Oration, by military and pagan emblems skilfully blended, to adore the latter while reverencing the former, and made their donatives conditional on their casting a grain or two of incense on the altar which they had to pass. He purified the Grove of Daphne because polluted by the bones of the Christian martyr Babylas. And so expensive were his animal-offerings at all times that the jest respecting Marcus Aurelius, as to the cattle praying him not to extinguish their breed, was revived; and such an extirpation was actually dreaded, should he have returned victorious from the Persian war.

It is to be observed, *secondly*, that these grossly pagan features were not brought round into greater harmony with recent unbelief by the changes then entailed on paganism in conflict with Christianity. An attempt had to be made to spiritualize and allegorize paganism, which began so early that almost the first Christian apologists notice it, but which reached its consummation in the Neo-Platonic school of the third century. Eusebius, in reply to the lost work of Porphyry on "Images," has, in the third book of his "Gospel Preparation," met the effort of this philosopher to find everywhere some ground, in

* Porph., "De Abstinentia," iv. 6–8.

nature and in the operation of an all-pervading principle, for the most eccentric as well as repulsive literalities of paganism, as in the rape of Proserpine the hiding of the seed in winter; in the labors of Hercules the passage of the sun through the signs of the zodiac; and even in the limp of Vulcan and the staff of Esculapius, some edifying mystery. Eusebius justly asks why these allegories should descend to the impure and revolting, as a proper emblem of the divine nature; why so many names and fables should all denote the same thing, as, for example, Apollo, Hercules, Bacchus, Æsculapius, the healing powers of the sun; and why in any case the unity of God should be so lacerated? Not the least argument against this school is the example of Plato himself, who, if he could thus have spiritualized Homer and Hesiod, would not have excluded them from the "Republic." Nor did this school rationalize more worthily by turning to practical account, in order to meet the Christian claim of direct communion with God, the pagan doctrine of possible divine visions and ecstasies, with all the appliances of theurgy and magic. There was here a true confession of want, but it could not possibly have commended Neo-Platonism to the cold intellectualism of the eighteenth century; and nothing could be less welcome to it in former antagonists of Christianity than the statement of Porphyry, in his "Life of Plotinus," that during his six years' intercourse with that head of the school in Rome, the master passed four times into the state of direct intuition of, and union with, the universal soul by an energy altogether mysterious.* Nor could their approximation to Christianity on the more speculative side have abated the prejudice of later ages. They developed the fainter outline of something like a Trinity found in Plato into a full system; in which the original good, or τὸ Ἀγαθόν; the Νοῦς, or mind; and the Ψυχή, or soul, represented the corresponding Christian persons. But this, which did not recommend them to the Christians, as Cyril of Alexandria † reminds Julian that their Trinity did not rise above Arianism, could not gain for them any sympathy with later unbelief, especially in a form so sternly hostile to all mysticism as that of the eighteenth century.

I now add, *thirdly*, that we have actual protests of more recent unbelief against its former ally and precursor. Gibbon

* "Vita Plotini," 23.

† Cyril, "Adv. Jul.," p. 270.

has not mentioned Celsus, and said but little of Porphyry; but his picture of Julian contains not a few sarcastic strokes, such as that his "sleeping or waking visions, the ordinary effects of abstinence or fanaticism, would almost degrade the emperor to the level of an Egyptian monk." * He says of this philosophical school generally that "it may appear a subject of surprise and scandal that the philosophers themselves should have contributed to abuse the superstitious credulity of mankind." † And, again, "The ancient sages had derided the popular superstition; after disguising its extravagance by the thin pretence of allegory, the disciples of Plotinus and Porphyry became its most zealous defenders. . . . The Neo-Platonists would scarcely deserve a place in the history of science; but in that of the Church the mention of them will very frequently occur." ‡ I am not aware that Hume has passed any judgment like this of Gibbon upon these writers, but his complaint in regard to Plutarch, an earlier type of the same school, indicates a similar recoil. "I must confess that the discourse of Plutarch concerning the silence of the oracles is in general of so odd a texture, and so unlike his other productions, that one is at a loss what judgment to form of it. . . . The personages he introduces advance very wild, absurd, and contradictory opinions, more like the visionary systems or ravings of Plato than the plain sense of Plutarch. There runs also through the whole an air of superstition and credulity, which resembles very little the spirit that appears in other philosophical compositions of that author." § Voltaire, in his "Dictionary," comes to speak of Julian; and he too is perplexed by the question how "a man of affairs like him, of such genius, a true philosopher, could forsake the Christianity in which he had been educated, for paganism of which he might have been expected to feel the ridiculousness and the absurdity" (article "Julien"). Voltaire, however, supposes that Julian was influenced in his pagan observances more by accommodation to his party than by conviction. "The Sultan of the Turks," he says, "must bless Omar; the Shah of Persia must bless Ali; Marcus Aurelius himself was initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries." But here, as so often elsewhere, Voltaire is less instructed than Gibbon in facts; and the fanatical zeal of Julian cannot be disputed. Hence Strauss gives up

* Vol. ii., p. 516. † Vol. ii., p. 514. ‡ Vol. i., pp. 468, 469.
§ Hume, "Essays," vol. i., note SS.

Julian as a prototype of unbelief, and through his sides makes a satirical attack on the Christian superstition of the late King of Prussia.*

It is hardly necessary, by any separate evidence now, to show further that the opponents of Christianity in the early ages, unlike those that followed, admitted the principle of a divine revelation. We do not say, indeed, that they admitted it in the strictly defined sense of the Christian apologists, as a remedy by immediate divine communication for a moral and spiritual fall; as the doctrine of a fall and of a divine remedy lay in such shade and obscurity in paganism. Nor do we say that they marked off a strictly miraculous period, like the beginning of Christianity, or even of Judaism, for these pagan writers supposed revelation continuous, and hence their supernatural appearances and oracles resembled the theology of Rome more than of Protestantism. Still the entire spirit of the early period, as we have seen, was out of harmony with the jealousy and distrust of the supernatural which came at length to prevail in the schools of unbelief properly so called; and no one then doubted that a revelation could be introduced and proved. To make this good, it will simply be enough to show that paganism was looked upon as itself a revelation, and also that Christianity was admitted to have some supernatural evidence.

That paganism was looked on as a revelation is attested by Porphyry in his work on the "Philosophy of Oracles."† This has been denied to be his, but it is accepted by Neander and the great weight of authority. It consists of responses by the gods as to the right mode of their worship; and Porphyry speaks of the collection as meeting the want of repose in minds that struggled after the truth, as with a birth-pang.‡ The whole of worship is rested on divine manifestation, as is thus asserted: "As to things to be sacrificed, and days to be avoided, and the nature of images, and the forms in which the gods appear and the places which they haunt, this and everything else relating to their worship men have learned from themselves."§ The

* The work of Strauss in which this is done bears the title of "Der Romantiker auf dem Throne der Cäsaren," published in 1847, in which a parallel is drawn between Julian and Frederick William IV.

† The title of this work, as we learn from Eusebius ("Præpar. Evang.," iv. 6), was Περὶ τῆς ἐκ Λογίων Φιλοσοφίας.

‡ *τὴν ἀληθείαν ὠδίναντες.* Euseb., "Præp.," iv. 7.

§ Ibid., v. 11.

want of books authentic and sacredly guarded comes strikingly to light in all such claims to found the classical paganism upon revelation; but the principle is distinctly conceded.

Hence even Christ might be allowed to be, in a certain sense, above the ordinary laws of nature, though the evidence of a universal and commanding mission were rejected. Celsus grants him magical powers, which he learned in Egypt,* and he matches him, elsewhere, with some of the prodigies and detached wonders of Grecian legendary history. The very effort in the next century, of Hierocles, President of Bithynia at the time of the persecution of Diocletian, to exalt Apollonius of Tyana above Christ as a wonder-worker contained a recognition of mysterious powers, though the Christian writers Lactantius and Eusebius, who replied to him, vindicated for the Saviour not only a higher dominion, but a pure moral purpose and an effectual redemption. The contrast between the two ages of unbelief appears in this, that when, in the eighteenth century, the parallel between Christ and Apollonius reappeared in English Deism, all that was to the disadvantage of Christ was retained, but the whole underlying conception of real spiritual powers, common to Christianity and to paganism, was struck away and discredited.†

III. Our *third* main point of distinction still remains, viz., the general acceptance of the Christian books by the hostile writers of the first centuries, as compared with the wide and resolute scepticism of more recent times. It cannot be said that there is no questioning, by unbelievers, of the genuineness and integrity of any book of the Old or New Testament, before the fall of paganism; but there is certainly a measure of acquiescence, which, considering the doubts in some cases of the orthodox and of the heretics, is a marked contrast to the adverse criticism begun as early as the seventeenth century and continued to our own days. With what general truth, and yet needful limitation, this holds good, I shall endeavor to show in regard to the three leading representatives of early unbelief—Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian.

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* "Orig. Cels.," i. 28.

† Blount's work on Apollonius appeared a little earlier than the eighteenth century," viz. in 1680.

In Celsus we have the fullest reference to, and quotation of, Scripture; and as his date falls so much earlier than that of the others, probably in the last quarter of the second century, as early as Irenæus or Clement of Alexandria or Tertullian, his recognition of Scripture books, or even of facts, is confessedly of great importance. He, no doubt, falls into a number of mistakes; but it is not so much as to the authority of Scripture among the Christians, or as to its letter, as in regard to its meaning, and its evidence for or against the Christian cause. The most adverse thing which he says as to the position of the Gospels (not one author of which he names) is that some of the believers, "as coming to themselves out of a debauch, transform the gospel from its first shape into three or four, or more, different ones, and alter it, that they may have evasions at every point."* Origen supposes here such a falsification to be charged as was only committed by Marcion and other depravers of the Gospels, and as did not affect the general Christian name. But even if we suppose, with Westcott, that Celsus, in his rude way, was giving a theory of the origin of the Gospels as due to an apologetic purpose, and thus accounting for the variations and apparent contradictions (on which he elsewhere lays hold) as due to deviation from a supposed common original, this will not affect Celsus's concession to the Gospels as accepted Christian documents, or the use he makes of them, as deriving from them the received Christian history. Hence, in reference to them, he says at one point of the argument: "These things are from your own writings, as to which we need no other evidence, for you fall by your own authorities."† Celsus shows by his citations that he knows all the four Gospels—Matthew and Luke by the genealogies,‡ Mark by the reference to the carpenter,§ and John by the blood and water from the Saviour's side.‖ The marking incidents of the Gospel history are also reproduced—the star and the flight into Egypt; the connection with Nazareth; the baptism, the dove, the voice; the itinerant life with publicans and mariners; the record of miracles, healing, resurrection, feeding of multitudes; the foretelling of one disciple's betrayal and of another's denial, and of His own death and resurrection; the struggle in the garden, with the cup and the prayer; the purple robe, the

* "Orig. Cels.," i. 27. † Ibid., ii. 74. ‡ Ibid., ii. 32.
§ Ibid., vi. 36. ‖ Ibid., ii. 36.

crown of thorns, the reed; the vinegar and gall; the expiring voice, the earthquake, the darkness.* These incidents can only belong to the existing Gospels; nor is anything stated that requires us to bring in any apocryphal source. So, also, the evidence of the identity of the sources of Celsus with our Gospels is greatly strengthened by the allusions to the record of the resurrection. Jesus is reproached for needing to have the stone rolled away by an angel.† The difficulty as to one angel or two is noticed.‡ Prominence is given to Mary Magdelene, with allusion to her earlier mental trouble (*γυνὴ πάροιστρος*,§ a strange anticipation of Renan's *femme hallucinée*). Mention is made of Jesus showing the marks of his punishment, and especially his hands, as they had been pierced.‖ Nor does the objection fail that Jesus concealed himself from his enemies after his resurrection.¶ This is but a portion of the evidence drawn from Celsus's own words, that, however he derided and sought to confute the Gospel narratives (and the same remark applies to other portions of Scripture), he did not question their position as the genuine and accepted documents of the Christians, but rather used them in that character to assail Christianity. His testimony here is evidently of the greatest weight; and his position as at once an immediately succeeding writer and an enemy gives the Gospels a recognition which could have come from no other quarter, even from later unbelief in the early centuries. It is impossible for modern unbelief to shake this foundation, or to resolve those materials which Celsus has attested as so solid and documentary, into the mist and vapor of shifting tradition. What he assails is not a cloud, but a fortress well defined, and the mark of studied attack and siege. It is too late now to obliterate his lines and parallels, which have even been added to the intrenchments against which they were directed.

With regard to Porphyry, as he falls a century later, and as his principal work against the Christians, filled with references to Scripture, has perished, except in fragments, he does not supply the same valuable matter as Celsus. It may seem, indeed, that one celebrated reference in that work is adverse, viz.,

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* It is not judged necessary in a work like this to cite the evidence for all these statements from the treatise of Origen.

† "Orig. Cels.," v. 58. ‡ Ibid., v. 56. § Ibid., ii. 59.

‖ Ibid., ii. 59. ¶ Ibid., ii. 63.

his denial of the genuineness of the Book of Daniel, and his interpretation of it as a prophecy written after the event. This, however, though an exception to the general habit of these writers in dealing with the Scripture canon, does not mean so much as may be at first supposed. It was evidently the question of interpretation that led Porphyry astray. Had he been able to make light of the contents, and yet admit the genuineness of the book, as Celsus so constantly did in regard to the Gospels, he would not have rejected a work for which the external evidence is so strong. Besides, it is to be remembered that this denial stands alone; for the Christian writers—Eusebius, Jerome, and others—who have written against Porphyry have noticed no other book, or part of a book, that he rejected. And, once more, the authority of Porphyry is of no weight whatever against a book so long before his own age, as in comparison it is in favor of books belonging to his own time or somewhat earlier, like the writings of the New Testament. Here, though less valuable than that of Celsus, his testimony is of consequence. We find him by noticing a difficulty in the genealogy in Matthew,* viz., the repetition of the name of Jechonias in each of two sets of fourteen generations, thus attesting its place and that of the genealogy in the Gospel of Matthew. So with the call of Matthew,† in the ninth chapter of the same Gospel, which is objected to as making the assent of the disciple too easy. And so with other points of criticism, like the argument against Jesus being the Word, as alleged in the beginning of the fourth Gospel, that he could neither be the inward Word nor the outward, and therefore could not be the Word in any sense.‡ These exceptions stand upon an entirely different footing from the objection to the authorship of Daniel. They admit the date and reception of the New Testament books, and only, as was in place for an unbeliever, deny their teaching; or they at times admit it, as when the Epistle to the Galatians seemed, in the case of Paul and Peter, to record something discreditable to the Christian cause. §

* Hieron. on Dan. i. 1.

† Hieron. on Matt. ix. 9.

‡ Theophylact on John i. 2. Op. p. 507.

§ Porphyry, as we learn from Jerome's letter to Augustine (Aug., Op., ii. 129, Benedictine edition), wanted to make out that Paul reproved Peter for such conformity to the Gentiles as he himself had practised. "Pauli arguit procacitatem quod principem apostolorum Petrum ausus est reprehendere, et arguere in faciem et ratione constringere, quod

The references by Julian to Scripture are chiefly of interest as affecting himself, for the question of the canon is by that time decided. More of his references almost are to the Old Testament than to the New. He readily quotes it and relies on it, though he throws out a rash assertion, which from him has no authority, that Moses had been confused and interpolated by Ezra "in a capricious manner."* He makes no similar charge of corruption as applied to any part of the New Testament, but maintains that the writers disagree. Thus, in perhaps the most interesting part of his work against the Christians, "You are so unhappy as not to adhere to the things delivered to you by the apostles; but they have been altered by you for the worse, and carried on to yet greater impiety; for neither Paul nor Matthew nor Luke nor Mark has dared to call Jesus God. But honest John, understanding that a great multitude of men in the cities of Greece and Italy were seized with this distemper, and hearing likewise, I suppose, that the tombs of Peter and Paul were with reverence frequented, though as yet privately only, however, having heard of it, he then first presumed to give him that title."† Without giving Cyril's refutation of the alleged absence of the name of God from the earlier Gospels that speak of Jesus, I shall rather add the vigorous remarks of Dr. Lardner, which strike into the heart of the still living controversy regarding the fourth Gospel: "Julian here acknowledgeth many things extremely prejudicial to his cause, and more so than he was aware of. For he here acknowledgeth the genuineness and authority of most of the books of the New Testament, the writings of Paul, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and that these books contain the doctrine of Christ's apostles, the persons who accompanied him, and were the witnesses of his preaching, works, death, resurrection, and taught in his name afterwards. He acknowledgeth the early and wonderful progress of the Gospel, for he supposeth that there were in many cities of Greece and Italy multitudes of believers in Jesus before John wrote his Gospel, which, as he computes, was published soon

male fecerit, id est in eo errore fuerit, in quo fuit ipse, qui alium arguit delinquentem."

* *ἀπὸ γνώμης ἰδίας*, Cyril, "Adv. Jul.," p. 168.

† The edition of Cyril's reply to Julian, to which this reference (p. 327), with others, is made, is that of Spanheim, printed along with Julian's works.

after the death of Peter and Paul."* In addition to other facts of the Gospel record, Julian alludes to our Lord's virgin birth,† his enrolment under Cyrenius, and the unbelief of his relatives;‡ and he twice alludes to his miracles, saying that he "rebuked the winds and walked on the seas,"§ and that "he healed lame and blind people, and exorcised demoniacs in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany."‖ A peculiar feature in Julian are his allusions to the Acts of the Apostles—the conversion of maid-servants and slaves, of Cornelius,¶ with the vision of Peter on the house-top,** and of Sergius Paulus,†† the epistle of the Jerusalem Council to the Gentiles,‡‡ and the reproving of Peter at Antioch.§§ The citations of Julian are thus only second to those of Celsus, and, like them, they supply no weapons of controversy to unbelievers, but only strengthen the Christian argument.

It would be wrong, however, to leave the impression that while, in the three particulars referred to, the unbelief of the first centuries deviates from that of later days, there are not many points of contact between them. This would be to break the continuity of history, which in different forms repeats itself; and it would be to forget the eternal sameness of those deep principles in human nature which make all opponents of Christianity radically one. The difficulties and objections of later centuries are largely anticipated in the beginning, and with a bluntness, a rudeness, a bitterness, that were not afterwards exceeded. The spirit of Christianity was too unworldly, and its claims were too high to be endured. What had this dead God done to merit homage, rising among a people who had always been slaves, bringing his salvation so late and to a corner of the world? Were the great literature, the unconquered power, the ancient laws, of the foremost nations of the earth to go down before a challenge like this? It is the very spirit of Bolingbroke, of Gibbon, and of Voltaire—ashamed, indeed, of idolatry, but up in arms against the humility and faith of Christ's kingdom. We can thus measure what Christianity had to conquer, not only then, but still; not Celsus only, or Porphyry, but Julian, the pagan heart beneath the once Christian exterior—the Christian culture that has miscarried,

* Works, vol. iv., p. 336. † Cyril, p. 262. ‡ Ibid., p. 213.
§ Ibid., p. 213. ‖ Ibid., p. 191. ¶ Ibid., p. 206. ** Ibid., p. 314.
†† Ibid., p. 206. ‡‡ Ibid., p. 324. §§ Ibid., p. 325.

and ended for nations and individuals in a more sad, pronounced, and even fanatical unbelief. To this conflict may the Christianity of our age still be equal, meeting it with the faith and patience, the love and prayer, by which alone in any age unbelief is overcome!

There was but little of Unbelief
in the 16th C because the struggle
which filled all minds & hearts was
between Rome & the Reformation —

LECTURE II.

UNBELIEF IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

Causes of Post-Reformation Unbelief.—Divisions of the Christian Church.—Religious Wars.—Falling-away of Culture from Christianity.—Seventeenth-century Apologists.—Grotius and Pascal.—Schools of Unbelief.—Reserve in All.—Deistic, Lord Herbert, Hobbes; Pantheistic, Spinoza; Sceptical, Bayle.

When we leave the unbelief of the first Christian centuries, and descend to that of the period after the Reformation, we are conscious of a stupendous change in the aspect of the world. The classical paganism is extinct, and only a kind of traditional shot has been fired over its grave by the mediæval theology, which is itself ended. A more terrible and disastrous fight has been maintained with a new foe; and against it the Crusades, meeting the Saracen and Turkish invasions of Moslem zeal, have been the chief, if not the only, apologetics of many centuries; losing to Christendom the whole southern shore of the Mediterranean, and leaving the Eastern Church and Empire a shadow and a ruin. In the Western Church the better elements that had struggled through the Middle Ages, increased at length by the revival of the study of the Scriptures, as well as by other learning, and by an immense new baptism of the Spirit of God, and favored by political necessities and tendencies that could no longer be resisted, have organized a mighty Reformation, able to withstand every attack, and resume the long-interrupted work of early Christianity.

It was natural that in the great conflict between the Reformation and its opponents, which swayed to and fro over Europe for more than a century, the conflict of the Church of Christ at large with Unbelief should be suspended, and for a time well-nigh forgotten. Here both Rome and the Reformation were outwardly agreed, the difference being as to the interpreter and the meaning of Scripture, and not as to its authority. There had, no doubt, been much and terrible unbelief in the heart of the Roman communion in men like Pope Leo X. and Cardinal

Bembo. But the Reformation brought a reaction against this, which, besides, had never been formally avowed; and the struggles of the early Jesuits, whatever deeper unbelief ultimately rose out of them, recovered that Church, with other influences, in a measure to its own traditional faith. The Reformers were too seriously occupied with their life-and-death battle against corrupted Christianity to think much of unbelief in the abstract; and their war with Rome, that took the place of the earlier war with paganism, did not afford them the same opportunity to bring in as part of their line of argument the apologetic view of Christianity. A still nobler reason for their comparative silence on this head was the strength of their own faith and that of their adherents. It was not a faith nursed on books of evidences, but on communion with a living Christ, that carried the Reformation through the Diet of Worms, the Siege of Leyden, the Marian Persecution, and the Wars of the League. Hence the evidences have almost no place in the Protestant Confessions and in the "Institutes" of Calvin. This state of things, however, was not destined to continue, and the difference here is one which distinguishes the seventeenth from the sixteenth century. The causes of these changes, and of a demand for a special apologetic literature; the nature of the literature which thus sprang up in the seventeenth century; and, chiefly, the features of that unbelief which gradually, and in spite of such resistance, shaped itself more and more towards the likeness of that of the eighteenth century, foreshadowing, without fully reaching it, will occupy this lecture.

I. We have *first*, then, to touch on the causes of the decay of faith in the divine origin and power of Christianity which sprang up in the century after the Reformation. Of these, some were indirectly due to the Reformation itself, and some were due to more independent influences.

Among the causes of unbelief indirectly due to the Reformation a large place is to be assigned to the element of division, both ecclesiastical and civil, which it necessarily introduced into the history of what professed to be the one Church of Christ. The risk had to be run, but the evil was not escaped. There was a rent made permanent in the system of European Christianity; and the same weakness which had sprung from the Arian division of the fourth century, and without the same possibility of healing the breach, was renewed. This might

have been far more than compensated by the purity, energy, and devotion of the younger representative of the Christian name, which, disburdened of the errors and traditions of centuries, so much more worthily bore it. But, unhappily, the separation ere long, though not at all so deeply, split up the Protestant cause itself; and the experience and spectacle of discord gave the first chill of depression to the hitherto onward movement. The strife of Lutheran and Calvinist, of Remonstrant and Contra-Remonstrant, of Conformist and Puritan, shook the Reformation in many ways; and, though it was able to survive and flourish, the sense of power and divine mission, which goes with unity, was abated.

Still more disastrous in their moral and spiritual consequences were the religious wars, for which the Reformation was less responsible, as they had in them a national and a political element, and were, in the main, wars of defence on the Protestant side, and not of aggression. Still, no religious cause can pass through the ordeal of war, and especially of long-continued war, even justly and successfully, without great injury to its purity; and the struggles of the Huguenots, of the Dutch Republic, of the Thirty Years' War, and even our own Civil Wars, were no exception. The picture of Wallenstein's camp, as drawn by Schiller, shows the temptation inevitable in such scenes; and though special circumstances may have restrained the evil in certain cases, and notably in the army of the English Commonwealth, the barbarizing tendency of war could not be escaped, nor the doubt thus cast on religion itself, when so long associated with transactions unlike the gospel of peace. That crisis thus threatened to become chronic, which in the early centuries had been mostly confined to the reign of Constantine. Nor did Rome ever place her rival in a more cruel dilemma than that of being suppressed by violence, or of surviving, laden not only with the reproaches of schism and heresy, but with the calamities of divided allegiance and of civil war. The peaceful and normal development of the Reformation was thus arrested, and treasures of evil laid up for the generations that were to come.

These consequences were indirectly due to the Reformation itself, or to the Reformation mainly as provoking Romish assault and intolerance. But there was another set of influences more independent, and which, through the spontaneous working of human nature, especially where the Reformation was

crippled as described, tended to the weakening of Christianity and the creation of unbelief. This was the action of human culture as emancipated by the Reformation. There is nothing in culture, ideally considered—that is, as the pursuit of truth and beauty—but what is favorable to Christianity. But if man cannot, in his fallen state, pursue culture ideally, if he can only imprint on it—especially in the moral region, with all the truth that belongs even to natural conscience and which the first apologists so readily acknowledged—deep marks of his own prejudices and errors, then it follows that for Christian faith there must always be an element of possible danger in philosophy, in science, and in literature, where Christian influence is not strong enough to lift them up to the ideal use of their own methods, and accomplishment of their own ends. The Reformation, when true to its own theory, never contemplated serving itself heir to the authority of the mediæval Church over all questions of human speculation—in other words, to a dictatorship in philosophy and literature. It was because it protested against this on the field of religion, and was understood to mean something like the same liberty on the field of culture, that it had culture so largely for its ally till the victory was won. But it was not to be expected that this alliance between the Humanists and the Reformers, an alliance where each sought his own ends, should always continue. The Humanist was not likely, as such, to accept always the doctrine that in the moral region revelation was absolutely necessary to complete the circle of his knowledge; and that, even in the proper domain of reason, the elevating and purifying motives of Christianity were required to lift philosophy, literature, and art to their highest uses and ends. The wonderful coalition between culture and revelation, which we see at the Reformation period, was likely ere long to be impaired, possibly not without some misunderstanding of the provinces on either side; and independence would beget isolation, and that, in turn, hostility. So it happened; and the Reformation, while never losing its own favorable impulse to culture in every form, lost the confidence, the sympathy, and the free allegiance of a number of gifted minds, sufficiently large to originate movements and tendencies which reacted unfavorably on its future destinies. Such a believing spirit as we see in Germany, making literature, after Luther, run so much in one channel, and in England, where, amidst a great creative period, a name like that of Bacon stands con-

spicuous by homage to the Bible, by-and-by gives place. A great thinker like Descartes, though born on the soil of Rome, belongs rather to the Reformation, and continues its work of emancipating thought. But he is a child of the Reformation intellectually rather than spiritually. The earnestness of his philosophy is on the side of natural religion rather than of Christianity in any form; and though some of the noblest Christians went forth from his school, it was too colorless to be absolved from all blame in producing Spinoza, and was followed by other marks of unsettlement. The rise of a materialist philosophy, vastly inferior to that of Descartes, in the schemes of Gassendi and Hobbes, indicates, in spite of professed deference to the Christian faith, an alienation from its spirit; and it is from elements like these, more and more multiplying as the seventeenth century advances, that unbelief grows to a head and bursts into self-manifestation.

II. Of the literature of unbelief as it now developed itself, it might seem most natural now to speak; and then to touch on the replies made to it in that same century. But it so happens that the most important apologetic works of the seventeenth century were not of the nature of replies to particular works from the other side, but rather of replies to the general undercurrent of unbelief that had begun to make itself felt. I shall therefore speak first of this apologetic literature, and then of the particular works that expressed the tone of unbelief more definitely; as it is more important for my purpose to show, as I shall before closing do, how this differed from the unbelief of the next century, rather than how it was met, either generally or specially, in its own day.

I can only glance at the apologetic literature of the seventeenth century, which showed how deeply alive the Christian Church was to the danger that was at hand, even before it had fully broken forth. I limit myself to two works, in which, however, the apologetic literature of any century might well be summed up—the "De Veritate Religionis Christianæ" of Grotius, and the "Pensées" of Pascal.

The merits and attractions of the work of Grotius are still profoundly felt, though so much has changed. It is impossible not to be moved by the earnestness of spirit which made him find a solace for political defeat and hard imprisonment in defending the truth of Christianity first in Flemish verse and

afterwards in Latin prose.* His wish to give his sailor countrymen a manual from which to impress their faith on pagans and Turks, as well as Jews, connects apologetics in a new way with missions. The old patristic idea that unbelief takes in all forms of false belief is thus also maintained, as likewise by the arguments against atheists and deniers of Providence with which the work opens. The proofs from miracles, from prophecy, and from the moral characteristics of the gospel, though they lack the depth of Origen and Augustine, have the clearness and good sense peculiar to their author, and are more systematically arranged. The learning displayed in stating the genuineness of the sacred books, and in illustrating the whole field from ancient literature, could at the time have been surpassed by no living scholar. The work deserved its immense success, and on the side of external evidence struck into a path which will never be deserted. But it was exactly at this point that its weakness arose, for the spiritual history of its author did not enable him to do equal justice to the internal evidence of Christianity. Though sincerely attached to Christianity as a divine revelation, and in essential harmony with its capital doctrines, as appeared in his defence of Christ's satisfaction, he shared in the bias of the Remonstrant school to a colder and more colorless reflection of them than in the more fervent stage of the Reformation, and the light of the supernatural without was not equally supported by the kindling sense of the supernatural within. Hence the character of Christ, the adaptation of Christianity, and the witness of living Christian experience —in short, what the Reformation meant, without fully drawing it out into a proof, by the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*—are so faintly touched as to be practically excluded.

It was at this point that the other and greater work of this century (in some respects the greatest in the whole career of apologetic literature) came in — the "Pensées" of Pascal. Though growing up on the territory of Rome, and in connection with one of the most remarkable passages in its history—the attempt to unite Augustinian theology with Romish discipline—the effort of Pascal was essentially in the spirit of the Reformation, for it based faith not upon the testimony of a Church, or a set of so-called evidences outside of Christianity itself, but upon the characteristic nature and operation of Christianity. The

* See Appendix, Note B.

greatness and misery of man; the enigmas of his being which nothing else can solve; its desiderata, which nothing else can supply; the coming of Christ in his own order of greatness; the highest of the three, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, and as much requiring the seeing eye to discern it as the others, while alone awakening in the soul the thrill of deepest recognition—this is the key-note of Pascal's apologetic, to which all questions of books and history, all miracles, prophecy, and propagation, are but subsidiary. If he can awake the soul out of the slumber of indifference, make it find its true self in genuine awe, fear, remorse, perplexity, and unsatisfied longing, then the condition is found of finding God in Christ; the Bible, with all its wonders, predictions, prefigurations, leads up to the Saviour; and yet he is discerned not so much by what these prove —though the proof is solid—as by the light which streams from his own person and work as the God Incarnate, the Redeemer of men—their Redeemer and Last End in one. "This religion, so great in miracles, so great in knowledge, after having exhausted all its miracles and all its wisdom, rejects all, and says that it has neither signs nor wisdom, but the cross and folly."* Pascal is thus the most evangelical of apologists. It is with him nothing to conquer atheism or deism by other weapons, if the spiritual glory of Christ has not subdued the heart to living faith. He is rich in new arguments on all the standard topics; his fragments more than the full thoughts of other men, his divinations more than the results of all their learning. But he never loses the central point of view—the dawn of Christ's heavenly light upon the humble and loving heart. This too, as he solemnly urges, may be defeated by pride and self-will, that love the darkness. Hence the idea which he is never wearied of repeating, that Christ came not only to be revealed, but to be concealed.†

III. The illustration of this profound truth we have in the declared unbelief of this seventeenth century, to which we now turn. It is impossible to do more than select the leading in-

* "Pensées," vol. ii., p. 354.

† "Il y a assez de lumière pour ceux qui ne désirent que de voir, et assez d'obscurité pour ceux qui ont une disposition contraire" (Faugère's edition, vol. ii., p. 151). Pascal here, as not infrequently elsewhere, unconsciously repeats Origen. Thus, speaking of Christ, he says, "ἐπέμφθη γὰρ οὐ μόνον ἵνα γνωσθῇ, ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ λάθῃ" ("Contra Cels.," ii. 67).

stances; and they must be treated not in the way of full discussion, but with reference to the more developed unbelief of next century, to which they led the way, and of which they came short by characteristic differences. The types appear, and they are also preparations; but the complete growth falls afterwards. This is not equally true of all the schools of unbelief; but it is sufficiently true to warrant this rough generalization that the unbelief of the seventeenth century was more veiled and subdued, and, so to speak, tempered by lingering reverence for Christianity, while that of the eighteenth is more pronounced and more antagonistic to every distinctively Christian claim. This I shall now attempt to make out in regard to the schools into which the unbelief of the seventeenth century may be divided. These are three—*first*, the *Deistic*, with its two types, the one more spiritualist represented by Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the other, more materialist, represented by Hobbes; *secondly*, the *Pantheistic*, represented by Spinoza; and, *thirdly*, the *Sceptical*, represented by Bayle. The veiled character of unbelief is most conspicuous in the earlier writers, Herbert and Hobbes; it is less seen, though still present, in Spinoza, who otherwise stands so much apart amidst the thought of his own century and of the next; and it is least in Bayle, who lives more on the confines of the century of revolt and iconoclasm, though still a doubter as to his own negations.

1. In taking up the *first* school, or Deistic, we have to begin with the representative of Deism on its most favorable side, the spiritualistic; and here we encounter one (Lord Herbert, 1581–1648), whose ideas reappeared all through, and who, though not a writer of the first mark, handled with no small ability, both metaphysical and historical, the negative argument, which, unhappily, unlike his brother, the celebrated Christian poet, George Herbert, he had espoused. Two radical ideas of Deism make up the staple of Edward Herbert's writings—that Christianity as a revelation is not needed; and that if it were, it could not be proved. The first idea is worked out on its metaphysical side in his book "De Veritate" (1624), his earliest writing, and then on its historical in his last, a posthumous one, "De Religione Gentilium" (1663). The second idea, besides frequent repetition elsewhere, is taken up in his intermediate tract, "Religio Laici," appended to his "De Causis Errorum." His book "De Veritate" does not broadly set forth that Chris-

tianity is superfluous, but veils this result under a discussion on universal and necessary knowledge, in which the writer anticipates some of the philosophical views of Kant as to *a priori* truth, and, with application to religion, marks off five native truths as thus the universal possession of the human mind. These *notitiæ communes*, as he calls them, or which have been called by others the Deist's Bible, are that there is a supreme God; that he is to be worshipped; that the principal part of his worship is virtue; that men ought to repent of sin; and that there are rewards and punishments here and hereafter.* He leaves it to be inferred that these notions make up a universal and sufficient creed, with no room for revelation; though here he wavers, and even at times professes to treat revelation as of great importance. But if Herbert really meant practically to supersede revelation, this by no means follows from his premises.† For all these five truths are accepted by Christianity, and yet there is nothing to hinder Christianity from being a special help to God's worship, to virtue, to repentance, to blessed immortality—indeed, the only one, for, as Lord Herbert is only laying down a theory of knowledge, unless practice in religion be equal to knowledge, his whole procedure is a begging of the question. This is still more apparent when, as he was bound to do, he goes in his other work into history, and faces the actual religion of the Gentile world. His work is here a starting-point, for modern times, of the literature of comparative religion. But it is in a high degree eccentric and unsatisfactory. The boundless mass of the pagan religions, as it lay in all sources—poetical, historical, philosophical — he reproduces, with hardly any classification further than that he divides the gods into the supreme; the elemental, that is, planets, stars, and sky, in which he runs together the data of modern astronomy with the old legends as to Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter; and the deified human; adding to the whole the catalogue of the *dii majorum* and *minorum gentium*, and bringing in elsewhere the deified virtues, Faith, Concord, etc. He thus goes over the same ground with the Christian apologists, but with a prevailingly softening tendency, so as to make paganism as rational and amiable as possible, though the picture is still sufficiently dark. He does not reproduce the allegories dealt in

* "De Veritate," pp. 265–268; "De Relig. Gentil.," cap. xv., p. 210.
† See Appendix, Note C.

by the pagan philosophers; but sees little in principle to object to in the adoration of the supreme God by a symbolical worship of nature, and even of heroes, though he cannot include the dæmons of Plotinus and Porphyry; nor does it appear that he would have had any difficulty in conforming in practice to the ritual of paganism, while intent on spiritualizing it. His most eccentric theory is his deduction of all the darker parts of polytheism, and of polytheism itself (considered as other than the symbolic worship of one God), from priestcraft. Unlike the great body of writers of his school, who with Hume have traced polytheism by a slow process up to monotheism, Herbert holds something like a golden age or primitive purity of natural religion, though without anything in that stage like revelation; and the apostasy to elemental and other worship is due to priests and ministers of religion seeking to create new rites and new votaries for their own advantage. This, however, cannot be carried out without involving the human race so seriously in the blame as to make the insufficiency of natural religion manifest; nor has Herbert with any clearness displayed the continued reception of his five articles as an outstanding fact, so as to bar the Christian method of recovering religion from this confessed corruption and depravation.

The *second* leading idea of Herbert is less fully worked out by him—the inadmissibility of proof in the case of a revelation. His objections as to that proof not being innate, or not accessible universally, are taken up and elaborated by succeeding writers — by none more than by Rousseau in his "Savoy Vicar;" but on his own part there is some wavering between mere difficulty and virtual impossibility of proof; and in his own case, as has often been repeated, he inconsistently sought, and, as he believed, obtained, for the publication of his "De Veritate," a sign from Heaven.* Herbert is thus restrained by not a few lingering elements of reverence, from the unmeasured assaults of next century; and he even concedes that, as a matter of fact, Christianity in the early ages extracted all that was morally good in paganism, so that only a *caput mortuum* remained.†

* The sign in question, which has often been cited, is first quoted from the then unpublished Life of Lord Herbert, by Leland, in his "Deistical Writers" (i. 24). The observations of Leland on the alleged sign are very judicious.

† "Relig. Gentil.," p. 230.

The representative of materialistic unbelief, Hobbes (1588–1679), though a far more vigorous thinker than Herbert, and the master of an unsurpassed English style, came forward less as a revolutionist in the regions of Christian faith than in those of ethics and politics, and had smaller influence in the former than in the latter. But necessarily faith in Christianity was grievously prejudiced by his errors at earlier points, as to the sensuous origin and nature of all ideas; the strictly self-regarding character of all virtuous motive; and the dependence of society for its existence and well-being upon a central power, created as an escape from mutual war, and wielding absolute despotic authority. Any one of those principles of Hobbes, rigidly carried out, would subvert religion from its foundations; for if everything cognizable be strictly confined to sense, the idea of God becomes so degraded and limited as to be really denied; if disinterested affection do not exist in man, though unity and physical power with intelligence might remain to God, there would be in him no moral attraction or greatness; and if the will of a central human authority became absolute law, though this law might in some sense be held to be divine, and to carry with it a divine revelation, yet religion, as relating the individual by a personal conscience to a supreme Lawgiver, and resting on his ultimate authority, would be abolished.

It is wholly needless to push further the consequences in the direction of materialism, fatalism, and even atheism, which follow from Hobbes's denial of a spiritual principle in man, and of disinterested virtue. But a few words are needed to lay open the singular texture of his theory of government, and to show how, in professing to receive Scripture, he really invalidates its authority. The veiled nature of his unbelief will thus appear in full light, and at the same time its far-reaching extent.

Hobbes, like Herbert, has a theory of religion, deriving it from (or rather connecting it with) man's ignorance of causes; as also from fear prompting the worship of the invisible made in man's image; and from prognostics taken for revelations. But these and whatever workings of what we may call, on his crude, selfish principle, moral law, do not yet create obligation. There is only the right of every one to everything, with the right of defending it, and the second right of renouncing this for the sake of peace, and entering into the social state, whereby the Sovereign or Leviathan becomes the universal dictator, and wields absolute power. So far as appears, Hobbes does not

bring in religion in connection with this social compact, but derives justice from the will of the sovereign body thus expressed, and from a third natural right or law, viz., that contracts are to be observed. In the other laws of nature, such as gratitude, sociability, forgiveness, etc., to the number of nineteen, there is no mention of God, but only of personal good to all the members of the body, these laws being only obligatory on that condition. Indeed, religion only brings us into contact with God, by contact with his vicegerent, the magistrate; and though a revelation may be granted to individuals, it can only influence themselves, but cannot convey itself beyond, so that the magistrate is really in the place of God. "The monarch, or the sovereign assembly only, hath immediate authority from God to teach and instruct the people," * so that no revelation can go higher. Hobbes, indeed, allows a "kingdom of God in nature," but resolves his attributes into power, and founds his worship on this; and then leaves to the will of the magistrate "those attributes which the sovereign ordaineth, in the worship of God, for signs of honor." † Hobbes hardly acknowledges, in so many words, that a professed revelation is to be received or rejected by the voice of the magistrate; but his system admits of no other nexus, and he is express as to the reception of the canon of Scripture—"Those books only are canonical, that is, law in every nation, which are established for such by the sovereign authority." ‡ So also as to Scripture interpretation—"When Christian men take not their Christian sovereign for God's prophet, they must either take their own dreams, etc. . . . and, by this means destroying all laws, human and divine, reduce all order, government, and society to the first chaos of violence and civil war." § Hobbes might here have stopped, as the magistrate thus armed did not need, and could even punish, his private interpretations. But in support of his theory he gives a scheme of Bible doctrine and history which is as paradoxical as ever arose in any school. This is to the effect that the apostles had no supreme power, because they wanted civil authority; that their decrees were only advices till the civil power came over to Christianity; and that even Christ will only begin to reign at his second coming, his sway

* "Leviathan," Works, vol. iii., p. 228. Molesworth's edition.
† Ibid., iii., p. 356.
‡ Ibid., vol. iii., p. 366.
§ Ibid., vol. iii., p. 427.

through magistrates in the meantime being a mere accident of their natural office. Hobbes's whole doctrine of Christ is low. The Trinity and atonement are held in word, and not in power. The essence of Christianity is that Jesus is the Messiah, without further definition; and the kingdom destined for him at the last is only a resumption of the peculiar Jewish theocracy which ended with the election of Saul, and of which this earth, and not heaven, is to be the seat, very much as is held by so-called Christadelphians. While the direct sway of Christ through his apostles and their word is thus reduced, the Christian is allowed by Hobbes to deny Christ at his sovereign's bidding, where the act is not his, but his sovereign's; and though he says that a Christian among infidels must be faithful, he limits the duty of martyrdom to Christ's first witnesses, and he will not allow that an obligation lies on a Mohammedan among Christians to resist State-enforced conformity to Christianity.* He tries to show how safe in practical working his rule is, for no Christian ruler would punish a man who confessed that Jesus was the Christ; and no non-Christian ruler would punish a man who, besides waiting only for a future kingdom, was known to be willing at the bidding of that king to obey all his laws. Such is the poor and servile end of Hobbes's scheme, morally considered, which is also worked up (as has been said), with whatever of Christianity it professes to retain, in a very meagre and rationalized shape. This is the distinctive character of his position as contrasted with what followed. The direct authority and self-evidencing witness of revelation he had given up in favor of a State-popedom; but he still professed to follow Scripture, even when dragging it at the wheels of despotism, and defacing its characteristic features.

2. That the seventeenth century could only utter its unbelief with reserve, or write it as in cipher under a professed faith in the Biblical record, we see in the greatest and, for future days, most influential of all the non-Christian writers of that age, the representative of pantheism, Spinoza (1632–1677). Here we still deal with a living name, and one whose place and work are so well known that little requires to be said, all the more that, as already hinted, Spinoza was not one of the great moving forces of the special unbelief that soon after him arose,

* "Lev.," vol. iii., p. 494.

but has only found his widest echo in our own century. It is impossible to deny the power of one who has influenced names like Lessing and Goethe, like Schelling and Hegel, and who, more especially in theology, besides leaving his mark so much on Schleiermacher, has foreshadowed the naturalistic rationalism of Semler, Eichhorn, and Paulus, the mythical theory of Strauss, and the vision hypothesis of Baur, Scholten, and Renan. But we are here chiefly concerned to show that the antagonism of Spinoza to Christianity, as in the proper sense a revelation, was, as in the case of Herbert and of Hobbes, disguised; while it must be added that the child of the synagogue rather approaches to Christianity while they retire, and that, in spite of the sad arrest which barred his conversion to distinctively Christian faith, he has left testimonies to it, of which, in the long history of unbelieving opposition, there are few examples. The degree of reserve and qualification which marks the hostile position of Spinoza towards Christianity will be best appreciated by bringing out first the variation between his two principal treatises, his "Tractatus Theologico-politicus" on the one side, and his posthumous "Ethica" on the other; and then the concessions elsewhere made by him to Christianity, which, settle the question between his two chief works as we will, still remain.

The system contained in the "Tractatus" (1670) is, roughly speaking, rationalistic, going higher than Deism in its appreciation of the excellence of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, yet excluding everything (properly speaking) miraculous; and though, with occasional pantheistic tendencies, still nowhere revealing such pantheism as is found in the "Ethica" (1677). It is so far the rationalism of a Jew, more occupied with the Old Testament than the New; but the principles laid down in one region necessarily apply, and indeed are applied, in the other, though Spinoza everywhere writes as one to whom Christ is unspeakably more than Moses.

In his "Tractatus Theologico-politicus," Spinoza attempts to maintain a system of revelation, which shall leave room for reason, whether in its natural workings in the common mind, or as perfected by philosophy. The Old Testament prophets, in word and writing, were really oracles of divine communication, and by a marvellous gift of imagination taught precious moral truth, though Spinoza will not call it truth, but piety. They fall into many errors, and God even accommodated him-

self to their mistakes; yet they were vouched for by their signs and by their life. Ordinary moral light, and prophecy too, existed more or less outside of them, as in the case of Balaam; nor can Spinoza, with his lower estimate of history, and his non-admission of a Messianic future, do justice to the grandeur of prophecy and its sublime unity as pointing to a divine Incarnation and kingdom of heaven. Miracles, in the proper sense, he denies, as involving a change in God's immutable plan, though it is not easy to reconcile this with the attesting of prophets by signs, unless the key is to be found in a note to the French edition, which compares the prophets to giants, or other extraordinary but not supernatural beings.* It is probably in the same sense that a remarkable tribute to Christ is to be interpreted, who, as a prophet, is exalted far above Moses, as one by whose mind God manifested himself to the apostles, while Moses was a voice in the air.† Spinoza speaks everywhere with respect of the apostles, though they are more like doctors; the afflatus in them being less startling than in the prophets, and more allied to deduction and argument. With these concessions to the substance of Scripture, there is a very free handling of the so-called accidents; and Spinoza carries out the distinction, which he is perhaps the first in modern times to state, between the Bible and the Word of God. The Pentateuch, and all the later historical books to 2d Kings, he regards as written by Ezra; the books of Chronicles perhaps not earlier than the Maccabean times; while the first part of Daniel, with Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, fall to one author even after the Maccabean period. These critical views, which have found few supporters, and which do not bear out the admiring estimate sometimes given of his critical sagacity, do not hinder Spinoza from regarding the essence of Scripture history as intact, and especially the history of our Saviour, so that, as far as history is needed for moral and spiritual ends, it is sufficiently recorded. In like manner, the moral and spiritual parts themselves, according to him, suffer nothing; for the end of Scripture is not to make out a philosophical system, but a practical scheme of justice and charity, apprehended by faith and reduced to obedience, which is really the same thing; and

* This is reprinted in the appendix to the "Tractatus" in Paulus's edition (i. 430), from which the other quotations are given.

† Spinoza, Op., i., p. 168.

as reason and faith move in entirely different orbits, an indefinite amount of error may consist with pious sincerity. Spinoza, however, does not go the length of allowing total error; and though, to him, the idea of common notions ought rigorously to be an encroachment on faith, his summary is not very different from that of Herbert, admitting repentance, but excluding belief in immortality. The following passage startles us, as granting a deep and wide necessity for revelation, and ending the whole discussion in a strain hardly consistent with the other positions of Spinoza: "Before I proceed to other matters, I wish it expressly noted, though it has been said already, that with regard to the necessity and use of Holy Scripture, or revelation, I estimate it very highly. For since we cannot perceive by the light of nature that simple obedience is the way to salvation, and revelation alone teaches us, beyond the scope of reason, that this is the plan of God's singular grace, it follows that Scripture has brought great comfort to mortals. For all can obey absolutely, while there are very few, when compared with the whole human race, who acquire the habit of virtue by the sole guidance of reason, and therefore, without this testimony of Scripture, we should doubt of the salvation of almost all." *

It is remarkable, and has often been noticed, how much the political scheme of Spinoza, which comes at the end of his theological, agrees with Hobbes. There is the same original war, the same dependence of right upon power, and the same founding of absolutism upon contract, though Spinoza takes the republican side rather than the monarchical. But he seizes better than Hobbes the spirit of the Old Testament as a theocracy, and draws from it lessons favorable to his own views, remarking the advantage of having the priestly power separated from the executive, and only regretting the confinement of the priesthood to one tribe; though he fails to see that this was connected with the typical design of sacrifice; and also lamenting the unstable equilibrium caused by the function of the prophets, on which he founds an argument for restraining the liberty of prophesying in modern times. How little Spinoza, in these servile views, was in harmony with the alleged freedom of the eighteenth century must be apparent; though candor requires us to make the same remark in the case of a great Christian

* Spinoza, Op., i., p. 359.

advocate like Grotius. But had Christianity acted with such deference to civil authority as Spinoza lauds, it could not have moved a single step; and the toleration for which Spinoza—here more elevated than Hobbes—ends by pleading, and pleading forcibly, rests only upon considerations of expediency, such as the necessary differences of opinion, and the dangers to the commonwealth in suppressing them; while his own professed readiness to submit his doctrines to the authorities in Holland is a great contrast to the sublime words in which Justin Martyr calls the Roman magistrates to repentance, in the close of his second Apology.*

It must ever leave a shade on the memory of Spinoza that he should have sent out a work like that thus described, adapted all through to the language of ordinary Theism, and even so far of Christian faith, while he had in reserve, and was circulating among his friends, the mature treatise which, published after his death, by his own instructions, revealed the pantheistic basis of his whole scheme of thought. It has been held, indeed, by some that even this posthumous work, the "Ethica," may, in spite of extreme and overstrained utterances, be brought within the limits of Theism. In this I can by no means concur; for, even if we grant that a sentence like this (one of many), "Every idea of any body whatever, or singular thing, actually existing, necessarily involves the eternal and infinite essence of God,"† may be limited to connection of thought, instead of pointing to inclusion of being; and if we give Spinoza every credit for sincerity in holding that he was more true than others to the words of the apostle, "In Him we live and move and have our being;" we yet cannot but feel that the sea of infinitude which, in his system, swims around the creature, really engulfs it; and that when he comes to the end of his fifth book, and to the issue, for him, of all speculation and all practice, the intellectual love of God, he has not only

* "Apol.," ii., § 12. "In persuading men, as in this treatise we have done, to shun these doctrines, and those who practise and follow them, we encounter a manifold opposition; but we heed it not, since we know that God, the witness of all, is just. Would that some one would mount a lofty tribunal, and with a tragic voice proclaim, Be ashamed, be ashamed, ye who charge the innocent with what yourselves openly do; and who transfer crimes familiar to yourselves and your gods to those who have not the least fellowship with them. Repent and return to wisdom!"

† Spinoza, Op., ii., p. 119.

left out all the usual landmarks of moral responsibility, but identified the object of love with its subject, so as to make God and the creature one. "The intellectual love of the mind to God is the very love of God wherewith he loves himself, not in so far as he is infinite, but in so far as he can be explained by the essence of the human mind considered under the form of eternity; that is, the intellectual love of the mind to God is a part of the infinite love wherewith God loves himself;" and also, "The love of God to men and the intellectual love of the mind to God is one and the same;"* to which may be added, that all the modes of thought, of which the mind is one, "taken together, make up the eternal and infinite intellect of God."† I cannot, therefore, withhold the judgment that this vast pile of thought not only labors under incurable defects of method, in seeking to reach facts by mathematical definitions, and these often assumptions of the things to be proved, as also in drawing out inaccurately its chains of reasoning; but that, however redeemed by intellectual strength and high purpose, it leads the seeker after God mournfully astray, and substitutes a fusion with an unreal, however sublime, idol for a genuine worship and a true redemption.

It is, however, due to Spinoza, and also to Christianity, to record the concessions which he has made to the Gospel history, and to its great subject, as full as, from his own point of view, were possible. Not only is there the remarkable saying preserved by Bayle, in his "Dictionary," "That if he could have persuaded himself of the resurrection of Lazarus, he would have broken in pieces his whole system, and embraced the ordinary faith of Christians;"‡ there is also, with a profession of inability to admit the incarnation, the testimony, "It is not absolutely necessary to know Christ after the flesh, but we must think very differently of that eternal Son of God, I mean the eternal wisdom of God, which has manifested itself in all things, and chiefly in the human mind, and most of all in Jesus Christ. . . . Because, as I have said, this wisdom has been most of all manifested by Jesus Christ, therefore his disciples have proclaimed it, so far as by him revealed to them, and have shown that, by that Spirit of Christ, they could glory above the rest."§ "The

* Spinoza, Op. ii., pp. 292, 293. † Ibid., p. 297; prop. xl. Schol.
‡ Art. "Spinoza," vol. v., p. 17.
§ Spinoza, Op., i., p. 510. Epistle to Oldenburg.

highest thing that Christ said of himself was that he was the temple of God; no doubt, because, as I have already shown, God manifested himself in Christ most of all, whereof John, to express it more effectually, said, 'The Word was made flesh.'" * But for the πρῶτον ψεῦδος of his system, and the fatal entanglement of mere words, "unity," "substance," "infinity," and others, all turned into an abyss of darkness by scholastic definition and mathematical treatment, this great mind might, through the attractiveness of a living Christ, have exchanged the dreariness of unbelief for Christianity.

3. Truly great is the contrast between a gigantic system-builder like Spinoza and a universal critic like Bayle, the type of the *third* or sceptical school of unbelief, to which we now turn. Bayle (1647–1706) does his work almost ere the century ends, for his "Dictionary" is published in 1697. The son of a Huguenot minister in the South of France, mixed up with their academic teaching, and sharing before the time, in Holland, the disasters of their exile, Bayle represents a quite different growth of unbelief—that of a worn-out Calvinist, whose early conversion to Romanism, and return from it, had, as in the later case of Gibbon, exhausted permanently the soil of faith; and who then hung on, like a withered leaf, to the Reformation, distrusting it, but hating Romanism still more, and presenting in his wonderful learning and acuteness, but total if not mocking indifference, the spectacle of the humanist who, at the beginning of the century, had been so friendly to Christianity, now soured and alien. The only good things which he carries with him outside the Christian pale are his love of letters, his love of liberty—for more, perhaps, than any great literary unbeliever, more certainly than Voltaire, he maintains a death-war with Rome as the enemy of freedom—and also the perfect impartiality with which he criticises every system, religious and philosophical, Arminian as well as Calvinist, Spinozist as strictly as Cartesian, and does not spare even the Manichæan in those celebrated articles on that school that have led to the impression (which, however, he refused to accept) that he was secretly inclined to that theory. We do not err, therefore, in referring Bayle to the sceptical class—a class in which Hume, and so far also Gibbon, were his greatest successors. Like them, he

* Spinoza, Op. i., pp. 515, 516. Epistle to Oldenburg.

fights without a camp and a country of his own to defend; or his only camp and country are the open wild of speculation; while his attacks are more covert than theirs, as marked the age. These consist in dwelling on the dark mysteries of evil, which, however, he is candid enough to show, press equally upon the theist of every school, and upon the heretical Christian as much as the orthodox; in presenting the success and influence of Mohammedanism as a set-off to Christianity; and generally in laying open the sores and infirmities of all churches as a bar to the higher claims of any; while his assaults upon strictly Christian mysteries, as the Trinity and Incarnation, are more rare and more guarded.* It is certain that the influence of Bayle was great upon the century that followed, in which, next to English Deism, his writings furnished the chief armory of French unbelief. Still his cold and negative spirit, and the entire absence of that passion for revolution by which the next century was so distinguished, must have limited his effect; and the doom which is written on all scepticism, and the more that it approaches to pure scepticism, the more entirely—"La Nature confond les Pyrrhoniens"—must have thrown him, earlier than otherwise would have been possible for so great a writer, into that dark background where, to use his own figure of himself, he sits only a cloud-compeller, presiding over mists and shadows, but creating no strong or fruitful empire. After all, the pure sceptic proves in the end the least formidable among the antagonists of Christianity. He cannot have a zeal "according to knowledge"—for to him, by his own confession, knowledge is hopeless—and a zeal without it is so inconsistent and so futile that it must ere long sink to the level of a philosophical or literary curiosity rather than go forth as a living and world-subduing power.

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* See Appendix, Note D.

LECTURE III.

UNBELIEF IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.—ENGLISH DEISM.

Causes of Deism.—Inferiority of Deistical Writers.—Blount, a Forerunner.—Toland.—His Successive Positions.—Pantheisticon.—Deism Proper.—Collins and Prophecy.—Woolston and Miracles.—Tindal and Light of Nature.—Chubb and Christian Morals.—Morgan and Old Testament.—Sceptics: Dodwell, Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon.—Causes of Failure of Deism.

In entering upon the history of unbelief in the eighteenth century, it seems best to pursue the subject according to its successive development in the three great countries of Europe where it had the largest career—England, France, and Germany. At this time, also, European literature parted, and the features of nationality became more distinctive. We have seen, in the works of Herbert and Hobbes, England taking the lead in this direction; and now, to a large extent, the battle is fought out on this theatre. It is impossible, of course, in this lecture, to write the history of English Deism; but the main incidents and features may be sketched, and the leading purpose of these lectures accomplished, which is to show how these debates look in the light of more recent opinion and controversy.

It is impossible here to go into an inquiry as to the causes of English Deism. The great cause, as always, was the decay of the Christian religion itself. The fervent interest in spiritual things which had marked the middle period of the seventeenth century, and made it, with all its faults, the greatest hitherto in English history, had, through manifold failure and defeat, been followed by the reaction of the Restoration; and the visible and notorious denial of Christianity in life and practice prepared the way for its denial in opinion and theory. There was also a downward tendency in Christian doctrine, both in the Church of England and among the Dissenters, so that Latitudinarianism, Arianism, and Socinianism, when carried a stage further, broke out in infidelity. The success of natural philosophy, through the impulse given by Bacon and the Royal Soci-

ety, probably contributed, with other causes, to predispose the mind against the supernatural; while the philosophy of mind introduced with so much distinction by Locke hardly provided enough, though this was far from the aim of its author, for truths of a region beyond experience. The great literary power which was about to break out in the Queen Anne period, though not of the highest creative order, favored agitation and criticism of things established. The right of discussion, conquered by the Revolution, maintained by political debate, and tending more and more to rid itself of the fetters of press censorship, supplied here the only arena in Europe open at that time to such a controversy. We may say that even the institution of an Established Church to some extent provoked it. It was a mark of ambition to strike deeper than all distinctions of Cavalier and Roundhead, of Juror and Nonjuror, of Papist and Protestant, which had hitherto divided the national life; the defiance of great dignitaries was more an attraction than a danger; and though the law in one or two unhappy cases broke the general spirit of toleration, this rather shed around the aggressive side something of the halo of martyrdom.

It was necessary that such a war should be fought. Nothing else could have aroused the Christian Church to a sense of its own life and duty. It was, no doubt, sad that so many able and educated men—some twelve or fifteen in all—should assail all the foundations of Christian faith, and produce a commotion lasting for half a century. But Christianity, though in a very low and unheroic age, proved more than equal to this debate. It was soon found that the weight of learning, of argumentative power, and, with some exceptions, of right temper was on the defensive side. The right of possession was vindicated; and the old gospel—in new forms like that of Methodism—began, throughout the English-speaking world, a career of advance and conquest, of which the Deistic failure may well be held to have been the prelude. It is significant how complete the decay of Deistic literature has been. It had its ingenuity, its acuteness, its controversial skill. But it has wanted the power of self-preservation. With the exception of Hume and Gibbon, who come in when it is nearly exhausted, no part of it is reprinted, and much is so forgotten as only to be found in our great libraries.* Not to mention other Christian apolo-

* I have to express my great obligations to J. T. Clark, Esq., keeper of

gists of this period, each great in some special combat, the annals of Deism, properly so called, have nothing to show comparable to the massive learning of Bentley, Lardner, and Warburton; the athletic vigor of Clarke; the grace, subtlety, and moral enthusiasm of Berkeley; the sagacity, breadth, and eternal freshness of Butler. The Christian writers, no doubt, were more numerous, for each leading work of the Deistic controversy called forth fifty or more replies. But numbers were here another sign of strength, and the Deistic writers were numerous enough to have produced, which they did not, some one acknowledged masterpiece.

I shall, in this lecture, follow generally the order of time, only I shall make no attempt to sketch the life or notice the whole works of each writer, or specify his opponents on the Christian side. It will be enough to connect him with some leading point or points in the controversy, to estimate his position, and to show how it has been affected by subsequent discussion and criticism.

I have to begin, then, with a few words on one less considerable writer, who falls a little before the eighteenth century, but who belongs to the Deistical school, and represents one side of it hardly brought up otherwise. This is Charles Blount, a gentleman of family, who writes, in his "Anima Mundi" and other works, in the same strain with Herbert on the heathen religions, but who introduces the French style of light and piquant remark, which becomes a fashion among his successors, even on the gravest topics. His works published during his lifetime are protected by saving clauses, but after his death in 1693, which was self-inflicted, and occasioned by the refusal of his deceased wife's sister to marry him, his friend Mr. Charles Gildon published in 1695 a collection of essays, which he called "Oracles of Reason," in which the real creed of Blount becomes apparent. The name Deists is in this collection applied to the body; their tenets are stated very much in the fashion of Herbert, but with more stress on what they rejected, such as mediation and sacrifice; and a distinction is alluded to between mortal and immortal Deists, Blount himself belonging, though with some hesitation, to the latter. It is not necessary to quote the free and irreverent criticism on the Old Testament to show

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the Advocates' Library, for the use of parts of this literature not otherwise available.

how far already this party have advanced; and the only other point of interest in these "Oracles" is the way in which the expectation of a worldly millennium, which has been urged by Gibbon and Renan as accounting for the success of Christianity, is applied to the same purpose. The most interesting thing, however, in regard to Blount, is the style in which, beyond all who followed him, he has tried to deal with the argument drawn from the person and life of Jesus Christ. This is a blank in the English eighteenth-century literature of unbelief; but Blount had already, in 1680, published a work indirectly designed to abate the singularity of Christ's history by comparing him with the magician or philosopher of the end of the first century, Apollonius of Tyana. This had been done before, as we have seen, to discredit Christ by the pagan governor of Bithynia, Hierocles, in the age of the Emperor Diocletian; and Blount, like Hierocles, fell back on the biography of Apollonius that had been written a century and a half after his death by the rhetorician Philostratus of Lemnos. There is no evidence that the original biographer had any intention to attack Christianity; but, whether or not, when his work was so used by Hierocles, it called forth a complete exposure by the Church historian Eusebius, who showed how fabulous and childish the wonders of Apollonius were. Of this production of Eusebius we may suppose Blount to have been entirely ignorant when he sent out again the biography of Apollonius translated—so far as the first two books went—with notes, designed to suggest the parallel which they durst not proclaim. We thus see, in the very beginning of English Deism, how feeble and hesitating was its attempt—and it never came to much more—to grapple with the problem of the alleged supernatural in Christ, which in our own day has become, with however little of success, the main effort of every theory of unbelief.

Our next writer, John Toland, though his literary career begins in 1696, brings us within the eighteenth century; and his troubled course, which ends in 1722, embraces the first half of the Deistical period. He passes through many phases, so that it is difficult to rank him under our threefold rubric, Deistic, Pantheistic, or Sceptical; but as he is the only one of all the English writers we have to name who in any form professed pantheism, we may put him in this list, which thus begins and ends. Those who follow for a long time are Deists; the Sceptics close the scene.

I. Toland, who thus sums up English Pantheism, is an Irish scholar of fortune, born near Derry in 1670–1, and converted early from the Church of Rome, with many of the elements of the thinker as well as of the scholar in him. He studies in Glasgow, and receives his degree in Edinburgh on the day before the battle of the Boyne, mingling in his studies, perhaps, with some of those Irishmen, like Francis Mackemie, who were about to lay the foundations of a great Presbyterian Church in the solitudes of a new world. He is attracted rather to London, and then, under Dissenting patronage, studies two years more at Leyden, next goes to Oxford, probably conforming to the Church of England; and, without having any fixed career before him, startles the world in 1696 with an anonymous little treatise, "Christianity not Mysterious." This is one of the writings which tremble on the verge of paradox, capable of being defended, but unwise and unsafe, and in an uneasy time certain to produce heats and agitations. Toland shows with great clearness that, in so far as anything is believed, it must be so far understood; and also makes out that "mystery" in the Bible sense is not truth incomprehensible, but truth not yet revealed. He also grants an element of incomprehensibility in Christianity, as in all knowledge, though he confuses this point by denying the distinction between things level to reason and things above reason. However, he is far from denying either revelation or miracle, and his chief offence is his paradoxical style, aggravated by the suspicion—though he afterwards professed himself a believer in the Trinity and promised in another part to explain all the so-called Gospel mysteries—that he made less of them than the orthodox, and hence took so lightly their difficulty. This treatise was opposed, among others, by Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, who charged Locke with having supplied Toland with his doctrine of knowledge, and thus became involved in his celebrated controversy with that philosopher as to certainty. A more violent treatment was measured out to it by the Irish Parliament in 1797, for it was burned by the common hangman, and its author had to escape from Dublin. Five years afterwards, however, when condemned by the Lower House of Convocation in London, we find that, through the influence of Bishop Burnet, and men of larger toleration, who did not approve of this style of defending Christianity, the process was stopped, though Toland had meanwhile rashly involved himself in another controversy. This arose out of his

Life of Milton, in which, in proclaiming the spuriousness of "Eikon Basilike," he was understood to level some insinuations against the genuineness of parts of the New Testament, and he with some difficulty cleared himself in a work entitled "Amyntor" (Defender). This was the start of an ever-recurrent debate, all through the Deistical warfare, as to the genuineness and integrity of books of the canon, till this was closed by the great work of Lardner, finished in 1755, on the "Credibility of the Gospel History."

The unquiet spirit of Toland led him to wander over Europe seeking either a literary or political career. A volume which he published in 1704 professes to be mainly letters to Serena, a name for the Queen of Prussia, Sophie Charlotte, a member of the Hanoverian family, and the same for whom Leibnitz wrote his "Théodicée." Lechler doubts whether these letters ever passed, or whether the whole account is not due to Toland's vanity, as there are no German vouchers.* But, be this as it may, they prove that Toland was still comparatively orthodox, though his Christian sympathies very little appear. The third letter, on the origin of idolatry, is far from extenuating paganism in the strain of Herbert or Blount; and a fourth letter to a gentleman in Holland expressly opposes the system of Spinoza, and acutely argues that he had not provided for motion in his extended substance, though, in a following letter, Toland himself arbitrarily solves the difficulty by making motion an essential property of matter. In a work published in 1709, and dedicated to Anthony Collins, under the title of "Adeisidaemon" (Non-superstitious), Toland is shown to have so far given up his faith in the Old Testament as to prefer the account of Strabo, that the Israelites were Egyptians, to that commonly traced to Moses, arguing that Moses was little better than an Egyptian priest or king, in whose name, however, later legislation found currency and acceptance. In an equally eccentric work, entitled "Nazarenus," and published in 1718, an opposite view is maintained; and it is held that not only was it the doctrine of the Jewish Christians that their law was eternally binding, but that in this they were right, and that

* Lechler, "Geschichte des englischen Deismus," 1841, pp. 463, 464 (Appendix). In quoting Lechler, it is impossible not to express admiration of the research, impartiality, and general accuracy of this work, which is still, after forty years, the best on the subject.

Paul had secured a kind of dispensation to the Gentiles on the easier terms of obeying the so-called Noachic precepts agreed upon in the Council of Jerusalem. Here Toland, who professes his adherence to this original Christianity, does not agree with the Tübingen school of our own days, for he regards the Nazarenes as only wishing to keep their law for themselves; and hence he does not expect, like Baur, to find, in a life-and-death conflict of Jewish and Gentile Christians, the key to the production of the Gospels, and to so much besides in early Christianity.

The last two works which Toland published fall two years before his death (1720). It is not possible, by any supposition, to reconcile them to each other. The one is a collection of four treatises, hence called "Tetradymus," the first of which contains the most paradoxical of all his opinions, that the pillar of cloud and fire was an ordinary watch-fire, hoisted up on a pole, the angel who thus guided the Israelites a man, and that man Hobab, the relative of Moses. Though Toland here sinks to the lowest naturalism, he still, in the same volume, professes his belief in miracles,* and repels the charge of Socinianism,† and also uses the words in regard to Spinoza: "I differ from Spinoza in the very groundwork of his philosophy."‡ Yet in the same year he sent out an anonymous work in Latin ("Pantheisticon"), professing to be an account of a pantheistic club or secret society dispersed over Europe, with a description of their opinions and symposial usages, and a formulary for the latter, which is a kind of parody of Christian liturgies. The work is not meant to be taken as a serious report of an existing fraternity or ritual; but it shows the sympathies of its author, whose identity is also manifested by the looseness of his philosophical groundwork, which is not a coherent scheme, like that of Spinoza, but a sketch of nature as a universal force or principle in the style of the old cosmogonies, garnished with extracts from ancient poets and moralists, and with denunciations of priests and superstitions. It is sad to see a writer of such capacity end so unhappily; and the utter contradiction between the two last works is explained by the fact (justified it cannot be) that in a formal essay in the earlier volume ("Clidophorus"), and repeated utterances in the "Pantheisticon," liberty is claimed to hold and teach opposite doctrines, "*ut aliud sit in pectore et*

* "Hodegus," p. 5. † "Mangonentes," p. 190. ‡ Ibid., p. 185.

*privato consessu, aliud in foro et publica concione."** "How hard it is to come at truth yourself, and how dangerous a thing to publish it to others!"†

II. We now come to the group of Deists proper; and though there is not a perfectly logical division supplied by the order of time, it answers sufficiently well, as Collins heads the argument against prophecy, Woolston that against miracles, Tindal that against the addition to the light of nature, Shaftesbury and Chubb that against the Christian morality, and Morgan that against the Old Testament. These writers do not, indeed, keep closely to their text; but the whole controversy, in so far as it did not degenerate into scepticism, is exhausted under these summaries.

We begin, then, with Anthony Collins, and his part in the argument concerning prophecy. Collins (1676–1729), who was an Essex squire, and a friend and disciple of Locke, is connected with other controversies on which we need not here touch, as opposing Dr. Samuel Clarke, both on the immateriality of the soul as an argument for its immortality, and on his views of liberty of will. He had also, in 1713, acquired great notoriety by a "Discourse on Freethinking, occasioned by the Rise and Growth of a Sect called Freethinkers," which was published, like all his works, anonymously, and designed to be a rallying-cry or manifesto of the party whose name it bore. This work has no legitimate or scientific method, as it does not define the freedom of which it speaks, or state who denies it, but is a continued attack on received opinions as to Christianity, and especially as by disagreements as to its doctrines and records making such freedom of thinking necessary; while, at the same time, a miscellaneous list of authorities is given—such as Socrates, Solomon, Epicurus, Hobbes, and Tillotson—who had all recommended freethinking by precept and example. This work, at best, has the cleverness of a squib, and is now remembered chiefly by the masterly reply of Bentley, in which that great writer founds upon the loose reasoning and inaccurate scholarship of Collins the most remarkable and varied structure of argument and learning, relieved by a wit—though dashed also with controversial abuse—peculiarly his

* "Pantheisticon," p. 80.
† "Tetradymus," p. 100.

own.* There is here a penetrating insight into the superstition and bigotry of the ancient world, passed off by Collins as freethinking; and on all questions as to the state and authority of the sacred books the consummate knowledge of Bentley is apparent. Especially in regard to the alarm created by various readings, the admirable statements in No. xxxii., proving that the more numerous the readings the purer is the text, have had great effect in excluding this once common objection. Collins looks less able and plausible after such a handling than he really was; and his more important attack on prophecy which followed, after eleven years, in 1724, displays the resources of no common controversialist. His book was entitled "A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion," and was professedly addressed to a divine of North Britain, anxious, in his remote corner, to be informed of the controversies which shook the metropolis. This introduces the paradox of an eccentric theologian of great notoriety in those days, the Rev. William Whiston, of whose views in regard to prophecy Collins takes very dexterous advantage. Whiston contended zealously that all prophecy was strictly literal, but had also adopted a view which made its fulfilment, as alleged in the New Testament, incapable of proof, for he held that the Old-Testament Scriptures had been hopelessly corrupted by the Jews. Collins eagerly seizes this eccentricity of a weak-minded theologian to start his own thesis, and, while he contends, against Whiston, that the Old Testament has never been thus corrupted, or cannot now be restored, simply that he may preserve the discord between it and the New, he also denounces his literalism as a revolt from the universal Church, which had always held prophecy to be fulfilled only

* The work of Bentley appeared in 1713, under the pseudonym of *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, the author wearing the mask of a Lutheran clergyman, and is dedicated to Dr. Hare, afterwards Bishop of Chichester, with whom Bentley was still on a friendly footing. It appeared in three parts—the first extending to Remark XXXIII.; the second to Remark LIII.; and the third, which has no title-page, and only a fly-leaf containing a list of Bentley's and other Latin works, "printed for and sold by Cornelius Crownfield, at the University Press in Cambridge," has only Remark LIV., which, after sixteen pages, breaks off in the middle. In my copy, which is of 1713, there are inserted, by a hand unknown to me, these words, on the blank leaf after p. 16, "This is the whole of what Dr. Bentley order'd to be printed, as Mr. Crownfield told me." A page or two more were recovered and added by his nephew in 1743.

in a mystical and allegorical sense. This wholly inaccurate account of Christian opinion he supports by one-sided citations; and as examples of all prophecy he produces five texts, among others that of the Virgin conceiving a son, and the words of Hosea, "I called my Son out of Egypt" (xi. 1), which he ought to have acknowledged had been generally held by Christian writers to be difficult of interpretation, and explicable only by some hypothesis not usually employed in regard to prophecy. Collins, however, conceals the fact that the great body of prophecies have been urged as literal, or, if typical, still with a recognizable fulfilment, and not with such mere accommodation as was no prophecy in the proper sense at all; and hence, though he does not expressly say so, he constantly suggests it, that the whole argument from prophecy, resting upon allegories that predict nothing, falls to the ground. Of the many able replies to this work I notice only the most distinguished, that of Dr. Edward Chandler, afterwards Bishop of Durham, whose "Defence of Christianity," published in 1725, went over the whole ground with remarkable Biblical and Rabbinical learning, and, leaving Whiston to the neglect which he merited, combated the positions of Collins. He began by establishing the universal expectation of a Messiah—for he limited the argument to Messianic prediction—and then adduced twelve Messianic prophecies, which, he contended, were literal, e. g., the riding of Christ into Jerusalem, his birth at Bethlehem, and the fifty-third of Isaiah. He then added four, as examples of typical prophecies, such as of Christ under the figures of Solomon, of David, of Joshua the high-priest, and of Zerubbabel. The five difficult passages, which alone Collins had indicated, and in regard to some of which the bishop held that there might be some latitude in regard to the sense of the formula "It is fulfilled," close the series. In his work the bishop, who is strong in the handling of general principles as well as questions of scholarship, urges a point ably raised some half-century before by Limborch, in his *Amica Collatio* with the Jew Orobio, that a divine messenger, as inspired, was entitled to bring deeper senses out of prophecy than were at first visible in it; and that our Saviour and his apostles, as accredited by miracle, might thus, in addition to what was plain in the fulfilment of prophecy to the unbeliever, also enlarge the knowledge of the Christian. There must be enough to accredit Jesus, as he himself and the whole Christian Church

maintained, but everything called prophecy did not need to be an undeniable credential, and its parts might be of unequal clearness.

Of his numerous and able antagonists, some of whom took up divergent positions, Chandler was the only one to whom Collins replied; and this he did in a very elaborate work, published in 1727, "The Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered." Here, however, he did not admit that the controversy as it stood was very different from what he had represented at the outset, but did his best to fight through the hard battle that was before him. He admits that "a prophecy literally fulfilled is a real miracle, and that one such produced, to which no exceptions could justly be made, would go a great way in convincing all reasonable men."* He fails, however, to see the force of convergent evidence as to true fulfilment; and because he can oppose something, from want of irrefragable proof, or of concurrence among Jews or Christians, to every separate text, the whole goes for nothing.

An interesting passage in this controversy is the denial by Collins of the Book of Daniel and its alleged Messianic prophecies, his arguments being a tolerably full anticipation of the Maccabean theory in its present form; while Chandler's second work, "A Vindication of the Defence of Christianity" (1728), contains a still abler reply. But by far the most remarkable thing in this debate, and that which makes it a landmark in the history of unbelief, is the fate which has overtaken Collins's denial of the early and long-continued expectation of a Messiah by the Jews. This point against Chandler he labors with the greatest earnestness, contending that no trace of such expectation is found till within a few years before Jesus of Nazareth; and then only to a partial extent, and as the result of Roman oppression, which reflected in the longed-for Deliverer only the features of a victorious monarch. This position is completely reversed by Strauss, who does not name Collins, but can only build his mythical theory on the ruins of this scheme. Strauss requires for the currency of the mythical theory, both as to what Jesus was and what Christian portraiture made him, a long and ancient career of Jewish Messianic expectation, and expectation not of a Conqueror only, but of a Teacher and Spiritual Head; and hence, without granting

* "Scheme of Lit. Prophecy," p. 275.

prediction, he grants anticipation by Isaiah and later prophets, in successive representations, more or less agreeing with each other, and propagating themselves in that extra-Scriptural Jewish literature to which, as well as to the Old Testament, Chandler appealed. Much of Collins is thus by Strauss superseded; and though the non-Christian students of Old-Testament prophecy have thus greatly increased their own responsibilities, they have only yielded to the stress of evidence in consenting to think of Christianity and its Author as so much more wonderful than the eighteenth century allowed, and as preceded by such an aurora of moral longing and anticipation as belongs to nothing else in human history.*

The discussion in regard to miracles, which immediately followed that as to prophecy, and made, in one sense, the most flagrant and noted passage of the Deistical controversy, was unhappily connected with a leader who wanted every quality that could give it a solid and a permanent interest, being either so blunted in his moral perceptions, or, what is more probable, so near to madness in his mental condition, and in any case so destitute of judgment and learning, that the deniers of Christianity in our day would as little consent to be represented by him as his antagonists. This was Thomas Woolston (1667–1733), formerly a fellow of Sidney College, Cambridge, who had published various writings in defence of the allegorical sense of Scripture, after the style of Origen, but who had alienated opinion from himself by his bitter denunciations of the clergy as slaves of the letter, and had at length, in 1721, been deprived of his fellowship for a eulogy on the Quakers, as nearer the primitive Church than any body in England. Woolston took up the controversy on prophecy as an umpire between Collins and his opponents. His first and most considerable work in it is entitled "The Moderator between an Infidel and an Apostate" (1725)—the infidel being Collins, and the apostate the modern Anglican clergy, who had fallen away from the allegorical method of the fathers, and become priests of the letter. The professed impartiality of the moderatorship is ill-maintained, as every word he speaks in the controversy is

* Strauss concedes early and various anticipations of a Messiah ("Leben Jesu," p. 170; 1864 edition); also that Jesus formed himself after these models, not as a conqueror, but a teacher; and, in terms of such long-current oracles as Isa. liii., anticipated his own sufferings and death, even as a ransom for sin (pp. 233, 234).

on the side of Collins; and he only professes to differ from him by retaining a faith in allegory, which made him see a merely literal Christianity perish, not only with indifference, but with joy. As the debate in regard to prophecy had become mixed up with that in regard to miracle, so Woolston now formally raises this latter, and seeks to preclude the orthodox from finding any refuge in the one argument to help the other. This occasions his six successive "Discourses on the Miracles of our Saviour," published from 1727 to 1729, with two "Defences" in 1729 and 1730. In the first four discourses our Lord's other miracles are considered; in the fifth his three raisings; in the sixth his own resurrection. In all these the aim of the writer is, without questioning the letter of the Gospels, to assail the genuineness of the miracle as incredible and absurd, and then to fall back on the mystical meaning salving the whole, according to the principle laid down in the words "The history of Jesus' life, as recorded in the Evangelists, is an emblematical representation of his spiritual life in the soul of man, and his miracles are figures of his mysterious operations. The four Gospels are in no part a literal story, but a system of mystical philosophy or theology."* Almost all writers have allowed the wild and reckless manner in which Woolston has criticised the letter of the miracles and the objects dearest to Christian faith, and especially his bringing-in of a Jewish rabbi (as Celsus had done) to utter his strongest suggestions of imposture or folly, as in the case of the miracle at Cana, the resurrection of Lazarus, and our Lord's own resurrection, when he was restrained from speaking in his own person by popular reverence or fear of legal consequences. Simply as examples of this peculiar style, I may mention that he speaks of the story of Jairus's daughter, and of the widow of Nain's son, as "Gulliverian tales of persons and things;"† of the narrative of Lazarus as so "brimful of absurdities that if the letter alone is to be regarded, St. John, who was then above a hundred when he wrote it, had lived beyond his reason and senses;"‡ and once more, as a specimen of the rabbi's style, that the three first Evangelists "confined their narratives to Jesus' less juggling tricks."§ It has been made a question how far Woolston was serious in holding by any allegorical residuum of the miraculous history.

* First Discourse, p. 65. † Fifth Discourse, p. 17. ‡ Ibid., p. 38.
§ Ibid., p. 52.

So constantly and solemnly does he assert his sincerity as a Christian on this ground, and so bitterly does he complain of the bishops and others for refusing him any credit, that I do not wonder that Lechler, without arguing the question, has been disposed to take him at his word. But, on the other hand, Archbishop Trench and Strauss look on his appeals to a deeper spirit in the Gospels as a mere blind; and I wish I could resist the tendency to agree with them, when I think how he satirizes in some places that very allegorizing strain of the fathers of which he professes to be the great restorer;* how he leaves nothing in Christ's earthly history that can be connected with his alleged future coming as the true Messiah—that is, "the Logos of the law;"† in other words, the personified reason which is one day to enlighten the world; and how he separates Christ altogether from any special mission in the world, since all that he admits is that the doctrine he and his disciples taught was, "for the most part of it, good, useful, and popular, being no other than the law and religion of nature."‡ How little Woolston was entitled, on such a ground, to resent the title of Christian being denied him, or to profess respect for an allegorical meaning in the record of Christ's life while exploding and ridiculing its literal facts, I think must be apparent. Another circumstance, as has been agreed by all, shows how little of allegory he could have retained, as the one subject which he brings out of every miracle is the lifting-up of the mere doctrine of natural religion, from disease or death in the letter, to healing and resurrection in the spirit. The wonder of these discourses is the union of so much rude and violent criticism with so much strained and monotonous allegory; and another wonder is the immense sensation they produced, though this is explicable by their rough license, and the scandal of an attack upon the established faith. Their rhapsodical character, however, limited the value of the discussions on the Christian side to which they gave rise. Even a classic work like Sherlock's "Trial of the Witnesses" could hardly live, with the monstrous legal case in the heart of it, raised by Woolston, that the chief priests and the disciples were parties in a formal contract to the sealing-up of the sepulchre, but that the latter broke the compact and stole the body.

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* "Moderator," pp. 100, 132.

† Supplement to "Moderator," p. 54. ‡ Sixth Discourse, p. 37.

It is much to be regretted that the authorities in Church and State should have proceeded against Woolston for blasphemy. He was prosecuted in 1729 by the Attorney-General before the King's Bench, and condemned to a fine of £100 and a year's imprisonment; and as he could not pay the fine, he was allowed apparently to purchase the liberty of the rules of the King's Bench, where he remained till his death, in 1733. It has been common to say that he died in prison. Voltaire, who was in England shortly before his trial, says in the article "Miracles," in his "Dictionary," that he died in his own house. I have been led, from inquiry into this point, to believe that each statement is true. He was so far in restraint; but the liberties of the prison were very extensive, so that he had a house of his own. Singularly enough, a point was thus illustrated which, in regard to the facts of Scripture, he had been slow to accept: that discord in narratives like that of the Resurrection may look very like contradiction, yet admit of reasonable harmony.*

With its next act, the Deistic conflict returned to a more quiet and steady movement; and it probably somewhat retrieved itself by the aspect of philosophical discussion, though it failed to find an advocate who was in the public eye unexceptionable. Matthew Tindal (1656–1733) had been a fellow of All-Souls, Oxford, and had, in the reign of James II., in 1685, gone over to Popery, which he had, however, renounced before the Revolution, his more recent antagonism to Rome being proved by his work in 1706, "The Rights of the Christian Church asserted against the Romish and all other Priests." But the recoil, as in other cases, had proceeded too far; and in 1730, in his seventy-fourth year, his "Christianity as Old as the Creation," a work published without his name, and never finished, revealed how deeply and long meditated had been this protest against all positive religion. This book, to my mind, has many and grievous faults. Being in the form of a dialogue between A and B, it commits the Christian cause to one of the greatest weaklings known in controversy. It is radically ambiguous. It has endless repetitions, is full of the fallacy of citation, and is crowded with particular objections to the Old Testament and New that do not belong to its main argument, holding right on, as in the case of the various readings, as if nothing had ever been said on the other side. But with all

* See Appendix, Note E.

these drawbacks it compels the breaking-up of new ground bearing on the relation of natural religion (so-called) to revealed. Christianity is as old as the creation only if it re-echoes Deism; but if it add anything to natural religion, it is an upstart and impostor. Out of this challenge arose the most fruitful debate of the Deistic period, bringing forth, with others, the admirable works of Conybeare, Foster, and Leland, and supplying probably more matter to Butler than any other of the unnamed sources of the "Analogy." The ground of Tindal was really the key of the Deistic position; and hence, with his defeat, the struggle became less close and stubborn.

Discounting the numberless particular objections of Tindal to the evidence or substance of the Old and New Testaments, the great point, which he urges with something like novelty, is the inadmissibility of revelation on grounds which all run up to two—that the Law or Light of Nature precludes its necessity, and excludes its proof. Tindal argued against the necessity or even admissibility of revelation, because the law of nature grounded in the being of God and his relation to his creatures could not be superseded, but must, from the perfection of God and his love to his creatures, be as perfect at one time as at any other; and he also argued against the possibility of introducing any revelation save by building all its truths on the self-evident principles of reason, and making this agreement its evidence, in which case it was no revelation in the proper sense of the term. Nothing can be more admirable than the reasoning of Dr. Conybeare in reply to Tindal.* He shows that he has confounded the law of nature, which is without man, with the light of nature which is within him, and which alone can be called "natural religion;" that this being in man does not partake the immutability which belongs to God, and can only be perfect in a relative sense; and that thus there is room for addition to the clearness of our knowledge of the law of nature; as to its sanctions (e. g., a future life), as to its extent, and as to our means of keeping it, such as assurance of pardon and aids of grace needed in a state of fall. Thus, so far as the admissibility of new light was concerned, there was a meeting of the

* The title of the work of Conybeare (who afterwards became Bishop of Bristol) was "A Defence of Revealed Religion against the Exceptions of a late Writer, in his book intituled 'Christianity as Old as the Creation,'" etc., by John Conybeare, D.D., Rector of Exeter College in Oxford. London: 1732.

position of Tindal, who here from the opposite side accepted the transcendentalism of Spinoza, and exalted the eternal and immutable at the expense of the temporal, while, like a Deist who believed in creation, he ought rather to have made room for history and progress. Conybeare also showed that Tindal, while exalting in every man the light of nature, and making duty discoverable to every capacity, inconsistently admitted something like a fall, but without making any provision for imperfection and temptation, and even gave up his case as to the sufficiency of nature by inveighing against the darkness and superstition in which Christianity and other traditional religions had involved the world.

Nothing could be more complete in vindication of the admissibility of revelation; but as to its proof, which was alleged entirely to depend on natural religion, and thus destroy itself, the answer was less full. Conybeare argued, indeed, that an inspiration might be conceived quite distinct from Tindal's alleged building on natural truths; and that even if an inspired person were shut up to receive new truth by proved agreement with old, it could thus enter. But he limited the evidence, so far as others beyond the range of the inspired men were concerned, to miracle and outward sign, which came in and did their work, subject to the proviso that all the while natural religion was not contradicted. The whole of this school of apologists, including Conybeare, thus built too much on probability, instead of holding, in addition to miracle and prophecy, that new moral truth and light embodied in the person and work of Christ was a separate and immediate evidence, as Pascal had so grandly maintained, and carried the revelation home to all who did not unfairly exclude it.

Another point where Tindal was effectually met was in urging the objection that Christianity had been so unequally diffused; for this objection was abundantly shown to apply to natural religion as well as revealed. This is one of the points where Butler, writing in 1736, six years after Tindal, comes into line with Conybeare, who, of all the authors of that time, most recalls him, while other points of contact between these writers are the defence of positive precepts, the plea for a Mediator, and the stress laid on human ignorance, though all these and similar topics are worked by Butler into an analogical argument, such as was possible to him alone. In the view of so earnest a debate, we cannot but linger on this period; and

though Tindal has been forsaken by an atheism and a pantheism that proclaim as confidently the clearness of nature in an entirely opposite direction, and would be opposed by an agnosticism that turns the twilight of Butler's scheme into darkness, we must remember that the issues then decided are of lasting moment, and that, by the admission of Mr. John Stuart Mill, the theism that then triumphed in the person of Butler and others was not the Deistic but the Christian. "The argument of Butler's 'Analogy' is, from its own point of view, conclusive; the Christian religion is open to no objections, either moral or intellectual, which do not apply at least equally to the common theory of Deism." *†

The discussions raised by Tindal fixed attention more strongly on the moral side of Christianity; and, in addition to his own criticism, the work of carrying out and popularizing the same ideas in this direction was taken up by an author whose history was remarkable, but whose permanent influence has been much less than that of the leading writers on the different branches of this controversy. This was Thomas Chubb, the self-taught glove-maker of Salisbury, whose acuteness of mind and force of style raised him to a place of some note in this argument, and who, though he handled other branches of the question, may be best considered in relation to his adverse criticism of the morality of the New Testament. Chubb was born in 1679, began to write in 1715, and died in 1747. He had been preceded by a writer much higher in name, Lord Shaftesbury, the author of the "Characteristics"—a work published in its collected form in 1711—and who is commonly ranked with the Deistical school; although he certainly took no such part in attacking the recognized views of Christianity as any of the writers whom we have considered. On the contrary, his "Letters to a Student" profess a zealous interest in true Christianity; and his strokes at the facts or doctrines of the Bible elsewhere are too covert, and too much defended by prevailing latitude within the Church, entirely to disprove his

* "Three Essays on Religion," p. 214.

† Some years ago, in *Macmillan's Magazine* (vol. xxiv., p. 147), Mr. Huxley praised the Deistical writers as examples of the strength of English reasoning; and Mr. Matthew Arnold, in a lecture delivered in Edinburgh, spoke of them as unrefuted by Butler: but in this debate, according to Mr. John S. Mill, they were completely overcome, bringing no objections against Christianity which did not recoil on their own system.

claim. His habitual tendency to exalt moral precepts, to the neglect of outward and future sanctions, had its side of truth. His application of ridicule as a test of religious principles, though irreverent, was not wholly absurd. His over-statement of the uncertainty attending the evidence and meaning of the gospel could plead the incautious language of Jeremy Taylor and Tillotson. Still this eminent moralist and fine writer had undoubtedly sinned against the religion which he professed to reverence, and in nothing more than in his accusations of moral defects in it, as wanting in "private friendship and in zeal for the public and our country."* If Christianity purified every part of human nature, even without teaching friendship by precept or example, it nursed that virtue; and in like manner, as it plainly recognized country and duties towards it, there was no need specially to inculcate zeal, as the Christian was to be "zealously affected always in a good thing." A little less of paradox and a little more of kindliness would have enabled Shaftesbury to see and to acknowledge this, and to let fall his whole objections; but now a writer appeared in whom the paradox was greater and the kindliness less; and who in the more advanced, and in some respects exasperated, stage of the controversy, though still professing to be a Christian, allowed less to Christianity on the side of moral excellence than writers in every sense alien to the Christian name have freely done.

Chubb, indeed, was long in reaching the point of hostility to which he ultimately arrived. His first tract, which in its manuscript state had secured for him the favor of Whiston, and was published in 1715, in defence of that eccentric writer's doctrine of the Trinity, was at least Arian, and the other tracts, to the number of more than thirty, which ran on till 1730, took Christian ground, though of a Pelagian character. Some of these publications displayed no small ability, as, for example, a set of controversial treatises against Barclay's "Apology for the Quakers," and some pamphlets on "Liberty and Necessity," in which views adverse to the side taken by Hobbes and Collins were maintained. The duty of prayer is well explained: "To address God for the obtaining a thing, and yet not to propose the obtaining that thing as the end of that address, is absurd."† Even Christ, within limits, is held to be the proper object of prayer; and all through these treatises he is recognized as a

* "Charact.," vol. i., p. 77. † "Tracts," p. 181.

Saviour in the Arian or high Unitarian sense. This is still the case in a work published in 1738, "The True Gospel of Jesus Christ Asserted." This gospel Chubb sums up in teaching men to live according to the reason of things, in affirming the efficacy of repentance, and in proclaiming a day of judgment. Christ is thus a lawgiver, but only in republishing the law of nature, and in the same sense he will be a judge. Chubb thus goes beyond Tindal in allowing an actual revelation, which is supported by miracles and a corresponding example, and is also helped in its moral influence by the founding by Christ of societies, and the institution of baptism and the Lord's supper. In carrying out this plan, Christ has been a great benefactor; but his gospel has been hindered chiefly by three great corruptions—tracing salvation to Christ's imputed righteousness, exalting faith at the expense of works, and confounding the Christian with civil society. Such is the scheme of Chubb in its Unitarian shape; but in its last phase as revealed in his "Posthumous Works" (1748), it is covered with doubt and shade. In the body of the work Christ's mission is still defended as a revelation, but a postscript by the publisher appends a long various reading in the author's handwriting, given as probably containing his last sentiments, to the effect that Christ's mission is only probably divine; and with this agrees the whole strain of the book. Christ's miracles are explained away, and some of them expressly objected to as incredible; the evidence of his resurrection is insufficient; the use of it, in attesting a general resurrection, denied; and his doctrine generally left in obscurity. In particular, the author has quite gone back from his faith in prayer, doubts any natural evidence for the capacity of the soul to exist apart from the body, and though he still believes in retribution, limits it apparently to the more important persons and events, and thus cuts off many from a future life, and decides its duration as to none. Hence, with regard to the morality of the gospel, great changes not unnaturally occur. In regard to Christ's own virtue, all that he allows by his being without sin is "that it might possibly be meant that no public or gross miscarriage could be charged upon him."* He stumbles at much in the Sermon on the Mount, such as the precepts as to non-resistance, forgiveness, and love of enemies, as if the latter were the love of compla-

* "Post. Works," ii., p. 269.

cency; takes what is said as to the laying-up of treasure literally; and even speaks as if the taking of no thought for the morrow amounted to "thoughtlessness and indolence." It is needless to argue these points at the present day. Even Renan and Strauss see evidence in these things of the greatness of Jesus as a moralist, and Mr. Rathbone Greg is almost the only one who, in regard to non-resistance and non-accumulation of treasure, has raised again eighteenth-century difficulties.*

It is interesting to find Chubb again and again referring to Methodism, to which, as far as I can remember, he alone of all the Deists alludes. He argues that miracles might not be needed in the primitive age, as Methodism made converts without them. But the argument for Christianity does not rest on miracles only, but on anything like them; and the operation of grace will prove a revelation as much as the presence of miracles. In this point of view there cannot be a more complete reply than Methodist experience gives to the whole question between Chubb and his opponents. What multitudes of persons—most of them, like Chubb, of the working-class—have been recovered by Methodism to natural religion! What multitudes more in the mission field have been, as it were, created to it! Can these deny the sense of a power more than human, which has made them what Deism never did, or attempted to do—new creatures? Where, then, are all the arguments against the Bible from the inability of history to rise to the level of the light of nature, from critical difficulties as to readings and translations, and from objections to particular narratives or precepts? The orb of Scripture still enlightens the soul and enlightens the world, and the class that are most blessed, even intellectually, are the very class, one of whose misguided leaders would thus, in the name of reason, have repelled reason's best helper and friend.

The last writer whom we have to notice on the Deistic ground, properly so called, was one whose literary activity coincided with the latest period of Chubb—Thomas Morgan. The year of his birth is not ascertained, but he died in 1743. He had been a Dissenting minister, but, on becoming an Arian, was dismissed. His name is connected with an anonymous work which came out in 1737, entitled "The Moral Philosopher," to which two volumes were added, in reply to Leland,

* Greg's "Creed of Christendom" (Introduction to the third edition).

Chapman, and Lowman respectively, in 1739 and 1740. This writer has originality and controversial vigor; but he is rash and extravagant beyond example, and probably was less followed than any of the leading Deists. It would hardly have been necessary to notice him at length but for his peculiar position in relation to the Old Testament. This involves two questions in respect of which he stands out from the other Deists—the relation of our Saviour and his apostles to the Old Testament, and the value of the Old Testament itself. Morgan maintains, out and out, a separation of Christ and Paul from the Old Testament, and defends them on this ground, while he holds that the Jewish Christians and apostles wanted to bind down the Mosaic institute forever on the Jews, and, as far as they could, on the Gentiles; for he does not admit that Paul went into any agreement with them at the Council of Jerusalem. Morgan, in denouncing the Jewish Christians, thus contradicts Toland, who, in his "Nazarenus," held that they were in the right; and in exalting Paul, as here the great Freethinker, he opposes Chubb, who held that Paul's conduct in relation to circumcision and ceremonies was one long act of hypocrisy and tergiversation. The sharpness and clearness of Morgan's outline is a distinct anticipation of the Tübingen school; for he appeals, as they do, to the Epistle to the Galatians in proof of the rent between Paul on the one side and all the earlier apostles on the other, and also to the Apocalypse, which, like that school, he holds to be a Johannine and anti-Pauline writing of the age of Nero; and the wonder is that, with these views, he should have accepted the Acts of the Apostles. A still greater wonder is that, unlike Baur, Morgan should place Jesus himself on as advanced a stage of the Pauline Christianity as the apostle. It is a striking evidence of the subjective nature of such criticism that when so many leading quantities are altered, the results are still the same. It is not less remarkable that Morgan, to break Jesus off from the Old Testament, resolutely denies that he ever accepted the *rôle* of Messiah in any sense, whereas Strauss makes the peculiarity of his career lie in accepting it, and seeking to spiritualize it even by his death.*

* Strauss thus expresses the view of Jesus in regard to the doubtful issue of his closing Jerusalem journey: "The cause itself drove him forward; not to advance was to lose all that had been already gained; while, on the other hand, if he did not shrink from the last step, then, even upon

Thus far Morgan, in regard to the New Testament, takes up a position in advance of Tindal and Chubb, a position of supernaturalism, holding, with reference to Christ, miracle (though only to arouse, and not to prove), sinlessness ("Christ who was not a sinner" *), and a place "at the head of a new dispensation, under which men should be justified and accepted." † It is when he comes to speak of the Old Testament that he goes quite beyond all the rest in the opposite direction in the vehemence of his repudiation, so that he has been justly called a Gnostic, and compared to Marcion. He allows a covenant with Abraham, in whom all nations might have been blessed; but from the Egyptian period onward everything is degraded to the Egyptian level; the law of Moses is purely political, and the people prove a world's-wonder of stupidity and superstition, without any special covenant relation to God; their conquests are barbarities, and their professed mission to root out idolatry a delusion and a snare; their ceremonies have no typical meaning, even human sacrifices being allowed, while their priests are corrupt and greedy; their prophetic order, though not without some higher aim, falls into imposture; and their monarchy ends in misrule and captivity. The sympathies of the author are with Solomon in his tolerant old-age, as it is represented, and with Jezebel, rather than with the zealots of the law; and though the people are held to have been capable of learning in exile from the Persians a purer Theism and the doctrine of immortality, everything goes downward, through their inherent Pharisaism and narrowness, till they perish as a nation, with the blind confidence that their national God, who was never anything better than a local idol, would interfere for their rescue. It is not necessary to report the answers of the other side to these extreme positions, which were the scandal of this controversy, as the style of Woolston was in regard to miracles; and certainly, of all men, Morgan could least appeal for support here to his favorite apostle Paul. Nor need I indicate how much more just, after the large and sympathetic strain of Ewald, who has done so much to rescue the Old-Testament characters that have been most assailed, even the freer criticism of the Old Testament has, in our century, become. Yet even

an adverse issue, the effect might be looked for which has never failed when a martyr has died for a great idea."—*Leben Jesu*, p. 252.

* "Moral Philosopher," vol. i., p. 225. † Ibid., p. 227.

the recklessness of Morgan stirred up inquiry, and added to Biblical knowledge. One great, but on its own side paradoxical, work it has been held to have called forth—Warburton's "Divine Legation of Moses." This, however, is a mistake; for Warburton's work was announced in 1736, a year before Morgan's appeared, though not published till 1738; and all through its voluminous extent it contains only one or two slighting allusions to "The Moral Philosopher."*

III. The course of the attack and defence of Christianity has now brought us to the last or sceptical period in the history of English Deism, though it is easy to see that an element of scepticism lay in it all along, and, indeed, some of those whose names I have to mention published some of their works before this date. There was also, as may easily be supposed, a tendency to atheism and laxity of practice, though the Deists proper disowned this connection. The Christian writers, however, while so far accepting this disclaimer, urged home the tendency; and this was made the subject of that extraordinary work "The Minute Philosopher" of Bishop Berkeley, who borrowed this title from an epithet of Cicero levelled against the Epicureans, as reducing everything to littleness by banishing God and moral government.† Berkeley's work, published in London in 1732, immediately on his return from America, where it had been composed in the alcove at Whitehall, near Newport, in Rhode Island, being the only product of the Deistic controversy born in the New World, goes far beyond its title, discussing with inimitable freshness and spirit, in the form of the Platonic dialogue, not only the questions between Deists on the one hand, and atheists and sceptics on the other, but almost all the points between the Deists and the Christians. It is certainly one of the most lively and even solid works of the controversy, containing also an application of his New Theory of Vision to the proof of the Being of God; but it is only referred to here, to show how the most generous and candid minds of that day recognized the affinity between the positions of Deism as defended against Christianity, and more extreme

* See Appendix, Note F.

† The alternative title, "Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher," is intended by the name "Alciphron," or Strong-mind, applied to the representative of unbelief, to give another stroke to the party. Berkeley's descriptions in this work are true to American scenery.

tendencies, and gave warning that the issues had already begun to be developed.

In now trying to arrange the sceptical writers that come at the close of this period (for no avowed atheists appeared), it is easily seen how different are the positions of those that fall vaguely under this head. The only thorough and philosophical sceptic is Hume, followed by Gibbon into history, but without any philosophical basis; while Hume is preceded by two writers who have not philosophy enough even to reach scepticism—the younger Dodwell, whose premises lead to a sceptical issue which he did not draw, and Bolingbroke, whose tendency is rather to a universal self-contradiction, and especially as to theism, than to scepticism as a philosophical principle. Hence our remarks on Dodwell and Bolingbroke need only to be brief; and Gibbon lies too much outside the Deistic controversy to call for much animadversion.

Henry Dodwell was a lawyer—the son of the celebrated nonjuror of the same name—and published in London in 1742 his work, in the form of a letter to an Oxford student, which was entitled "Christianity not Founded on Argument." This work had no small novelty, and it made a great sensation. Its author writes as a zealous Christian, who deplores the folly of trying to prove Christianity, and falls back on the work and witness of the Holy Spirit, which is described in the most exalted strain of mysticism as "an irresistible light from heaven, that flashes conviction in a moment, so that this faith is completed in an instant. and the most perfect and finished creed produced at once."* Henceforth "we are not left liable one moment to a possibility of error and imposture."† Reason has nothing to do either in furnishing the evidence or examining the contents of Scripture; but its place is taken by a "constant particular revelation imparted separately and supernaturally to every individual."‡ It might seem as if the design of our author were thus to exalt the work of the spirit, and found on it, however extravagantly stated, a genuine faith. But it is very different, seeking to try by such an extreme standard the faith of the Christian as possibly justified also by reason; and then because reason necessarily cannot reach this, and this is not seriously proposed, to represent faith as mere delusion. It is exactly the same process as in Collins. Prophecy, taken

* P. 59. † P. 60. ‡ P. 112.

literally, fails; and so also, reason, as a ground of faith, fails. But there is still an allegorical fulfilment, and there is still a mystical faith; while each is laughed at by its proposer rather than seriously urged. Nothing can be more unreasonable than the way in which Dodwell excludes reason from entering into faith. Reason, by demanding suspense of judgment on the side of the young, would forbid education, would brand inquiry as disbelief, would fail to reach strength and unity of conviction, and so forth. It is all the while kept out of sight that the agency of the Spirit of God includes the use, not of new truth, but of the very truth of Scripture, which, however, this writer depreciates as "the voice of God, which has long since dwindled to human tradition,"* so that, however Christians may exalt, as they do, the inward working of the Holy Ghost, they never shut out the reasonable action of truth on the soul. When this was made clear, the hollowness of this treatise became apparent, and a revulsion was rather produced by the professedly reverential, but really irreverent, use of a Bible doctrine to overthrow Bible Christianity; for this writer ridiculed the faith of a mother or sister thus implanted, and having all the infallibility of inspiration.† I regret, therefore, that I cannot agree with Lechler, weighty as his voice is, in supposing that Dodwell created any epoch. Nor do I see that he was inwardly and deeply sceptical in holding a dualism of faith and reason, for while he no doubt struck out at Dr. Clarke and the Boyle Lecture, and his arguments against reason in relation to Christianity necessarily admitted of extension to reason in relation to natural religion—an extension complained of even by Chubb—I find no evidence of any deep seriousness on the part of Dodwell in this direction, and his great aim seems to have been to perplex and stagger the orthodox, while he thought that the freethinkers could take care of themselves. Nor can I agree that Dodwell was not fully answered. Not to speak of others, he was admirably met by Doddridge, whose faculties never appeared to greater advantage; and who, by setting forth the doctrine of the influence of the spirit with warmth as well as discrimination, not only corrected Dodwell's exaggerations, but redressed a frequent omission in the Christian argument.‡

* P. 52. † P. 114.

‡ Doddridge's answer to Dodwell is found in his collected Works (vol. i., pp. 472-590). The three letters are dated Northampton, March 4, 1742-43.

Among the sceptical writers of this period I have, with some hesitation, ranked the celebrated Lord Bolingbroke, in spite of his own constant profession to rank as a theist. To enter into the political or general literary career of this statesman is not my purpose. His life measures the whole Deistic controversy, as he was born in 1678 and died in 1751. Whatever greatness he had as a politician and an orator has not been carried by him into this region of argument; as by universal consent his posthumous "Philosophical Works," published in five volumes in 1754, and mainly occupied with the relations of philosophy and religion, and the claims of natural religion and revelation, fall below what was expected of him, and have long since passed into oblivion. His failure is due not so much to the want of general intelligence and literary power, for these volumes give token of a large, vigorous, and cultured mind, as to the unhappy strength of prejudice, and even antipathy, which break out in an unfairness and violence to which hardly any other of the Deistic writers attain, and which contrast singularly with the sweep and grace of style which these mostly lack. There is also an ambitious aim, which Bolingbroke was not fitted, even had his conception of Christianity been true, to realize. This was to illustrate the influence of philosophy, especially the Platonic, in producing or corrupting it, to disengage the primitive Christianity from the alleged Pauline and patristic depravations which it underwent, and to trace the career of spiritual tyranny by which it was moulded into the Papacy and other usurpations. All this was to furnish the means of estimating the comparatively slender obligation of mankind to Christianity, and especially to unmask the error, superstition, and fanaticism of the Old Testament, for which Christianity had become responsible. Now, to all this Bolingbroke was wholly unequal. He had filled his mind with that crude and uncritical knowledge, to whose vision Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato, and Plotinus stood all on the same line. He was as much at sea in the Fathers, and does not seem to have read the Old or New Testament in the original. Where his shrewdness and his knowledge of history come to his help is in his account of the political and hierarchical corruptions of Christianity; but here as elsewhere his work is a very defective anticipation of Gibbon, because without the learning and fairness, after its kind, which Gibbon displays. It is certainly astonishing that any statesman should speak of the majestic structure

reared by Moses only in terms of contempt and vituperation. "He put this one God to as many and as unworthy uses, in the service of man, as the heathens put their many gods."* He grants, indeed, sublime ideas of God "in many passages in Job, in Isaiah, in the Psalms, and in other parts of the Old Testament;" but adds, "It will not be hard to quote Mahometan and even pagan writers who have spoken of him with as much nobleness of style,"† and sums up the character of the Jews "as the most illiterate, superstitious, and absurd race of men who ever pretended to a system of things, divine or human."‡ These denunciations, however, of a people who carried their god "before them in a wooden trunk"§ would not rank Bolingbroke among sceptical unbelievers, for they are compatible with the strongest dogmatism. Nor do I fasten this character on him simply from his contradictions as to Christianity, as, for example, where he says of it, "The gospel of Christ is one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence, and of universal charity;"‖ and yet charges on our Saviour that "He gave answers that were equivocal;"¶ that "He kept the Jews in error—at least did nothing to draw them out of it;"** and roundly declares, "On the whole, the moral character imputed to the Supreme Being by Christian theology differs little from that imputed to him by the Jewish, the difference being more apparent than real."†† Where Bolingbroke tends to scepticism, as contradistinguished from other Deists, is in his doctrine that only God's natural attributes, with his wisdom, are cognizable by us, but that we dare not pronounce on such so-called attributes as goodness and justice. "Divines have distinguished in their bold analyses between God's physical and moral attributes, for which distinction, though I see several theological, I do not see one religious purpose that it is necessary to answer."‡‡ Hence he argues at great length against this distinction, and even seeks, in connection with the rejection of it, to vindicate the government of God in the unequal distributions of the present life. There is nothing in God, as in us, requiring any day of judgment to clear up these difficulties; and hence this argument for a future life has no

* "Philosophical Works," vol. v., p. 371.
† Ibid., p. 371.
‡ Ibid., p. 162.
§ Vol. iv., p. 94.
‖ Ibid., p. 144.
¶ Vol. iii., p. 212.
** Ibid., pp. 21, 211.
†† Vol. v., p. 175.
‡‡ Vol. iii., p. 411.

solidity, and the doctrine of such attributes imitable by man is only a playing by Christian divines into the hands of the atheists. Now, assuredly, if Bolingbroke had stuck to this, we should have a sceptical principle; and God would be no God if he might, for aught we knew, be morally unlike us, and—abating certain excepted cases—wholly incapable of imitation by us. But here again, with his frequent incoherence, this is recalled, and language like this is held: "It is not possible for me to conceive any attribute standing on the other side of God's justice. No attribute can hold that place, except cruelty be a divine attribute, which it would be blasphemous to suppose, though the Jews and some other barbarous people have supposed it to be so."* This is eminently characteristic of Bolingbroke's whole procedure. God is to be lifted, even by a departure from the creed of Deism, above our human ideas of justice or goodness, that there may be no need of future judgment; and yet these ideas are to be retained, when the morality of the Old Testament or of Christianity, which is declared little different, is to be weighed and found wanting. This element of inconsistency and prejudice no doubt greatly limited Bolingbroke's authority in England; but unhappily it reappeared in Voltaire, who, influenced by him perhaps more than by any other, took up the same conflict in France.

When we come now to the name which alone represents philosophical scepticism in the world of English unbelief—that of David Hume (1711–1776)—it must be evident that some deeply interesting questions, bearing on Hume's position in relation to philosophy and religion, need not be here raised. Granting that Hume wished to rank as a sceptic, in the broad sense of that term, we need not inquire here whether he merely wished to reduce to a sceptical or contradictory issue the premises of other philosophers, or whether he struck more deeply at any possible harmony of the data of reason. We need not inquire whether his "Treatise of Human Nature" or his later works, or some deeper element common to both, is to be accepted as the last word of his speculation. We need not inquire what the value is as knowledge of all that can be reduced to impressions and ideas, and how far Hume proceeded as a dogmatist in doubting of all that lay beyond, whether as to self or God. Nor need we inquire how far his procedure in

* Vol. v., p. 144.

dealing with higher truths than those of experience was always strictly on the basis of his own system, if system it could be called, and not of other principles of criticism. It is enough for our purpose that, in all his works alike, the result is reached, that beyond the uniform succession of sensible phenomena there is nothing proved of self, or God, or moral government, and apparently nothing provable if his inlets of knowledge are alone allowed. Hume secures a kind of provisional substitute for mental unity and identity in his succession of phenomena, where uniformity takes the place of causation; and he builds up on the sense of pleasure and the law of association a scheme of utility which comes into the place of moral order. But for God, and all that is connected with his character and attributes, his theory of knowledge has no door of entrance, and hence, except in so far as his procedure is criticism of the theories of others, it ends in negative dogmatism. Hence his writings on natural religion are not, to my mind, sufficiently fair, for they suggest that the belief in God is a rationally provable thesis, only not proved; whereas, on Hume's principles, it is, *ab initio*, beyond the region of probation. His "Natural History of Religion," which derives theism from polytheism, and contrasts the one with the other as to effects and consequences, not only departs from the whole school of Deists, but leaves out of sight on his ground the essential darkness of the subject, except as between two different forms of an illusion. In like manner, his "Dialogues on Natural Religion" often wander from this fundamental point, for moral difficulties have here no place, and the case would be as hopeless, though these did not press on theism or Christianity; and such difficulties as that the world is a singular effect are equally irrelevant, except as a mere *argumentum ad hominem;* for even if worlds were created, one after another, in our view, it would come to the same issue; and we could not connect any or all with an utterly incognizable Author. The same remark applies, I think, to his celebrated argument against miracles. It professes to be a new argument, which the author flattered himself he had discovered, and an argument resting on the relation of testimony to experience. Our faith in the uniformity of nature, and our faith in the reliableness of testimony, is each due to experience. Hence the one at highest can only balance the other; and we never can believe a miracle. Now, not to mention that there is nothing here peculiar to testimony, and

we could not be kept from believing testimony if we could only believe sense, the root of the difficulty lies in the idea of a uniformity of nature without a God behind it; for if God be once believed in, a miracle becomes credible, either as a matter of sense or of testimony; and there is no special difficulty in testimony such as Hume urged. This is admitted by Mr. John Stuart Mill in these words: "Once admit a God, and the production by his direct volition of an effect which in any case owed its origin to his creative will is no longer a purely arbitrary hypothesis to account for the fact, but must be reckoned with as a serious possibility."* It is true that Mr. Mill, when weighing the evidence, chiefly on grounds which have emerged since Hume's days as to the growing rigor of scientific induction, comes to the conclusion that "miracles have no claim whatever to the character of historical facts;" but, at any rate, the strength of Hume's argument is by him abandoned, and its apparent force is said to lie in the exclusion of God, just as the admission of God, even in idea, requires Mr. Mill to find a still newer exception to miracles; and we learn that what may have been credible in Hume's days is so no longer, as our century is so much more scientific than his.

In truth, Hume had little in common with ordinary Deism. Not only did he write to Dr. Blair in reference to Campbell, when the latter sent him his "Dissertation on Miracles," "I could wish your friend had not denominated me an infidel writer;"† but when Mrs. Mallet, wife of the editor of Bolingbroke, accosted him with the words "We Deists ought to know one another," he turned away with the disclaimer, "Madam, I am no Deist; I do not style myself so; neither do I desire to be known by that appellation."‡ Hume was too acute to have adopted many of their reasonings; for example, that of Bolingbroke, who argued from general tradition that the world had a beginning;§ for this, by breaking the uniformity of nature, at once led to miracle; nor could he have held for a moment, with Tindal, the clearness of the light of nature. He lies outside of the Deistical controversy in time not less than in spirit. He had, indeed, fallen upon his view as to miracles when still in the Jesuit College at La Flèche, and meant to include it in his Treatise in 1739; but it did not come out till his "Philo-

* "Three Essays," p. 232.
† Burton's "Life of Hume," ii., p. 116.
‡ Ibid., ii., p. 141.
§ "Philosophical Works," vol. v., p. 230.

sophical Essays concerning the Understanding," in 1748. Nor was this essay to all appearance connected with the very interesting revival of the controversy on miracles which began with the first answer (in 1744), fifteen years after its publication, to Sherlock's "Trial of the Witnesses," and ran on till West "On the Resurrection," in 1747. There is no trace of connection between this very late passage of the struggle, to which also Lyttelton on the "Conversion of St. Paul" belonged, and Hume's disquisition, though the latter became immediately a mark for criticism on its own ground, of which by far the ablest specimen was that of Campbell in 1762. The later years of Hume are marked by reticence as to his religious position. He is even pleased with any relenting on the part of the orthodox towards him, and speaks of his employment in the French embassy under one of religious profession like Lord Hertford as working for him "a kind of regeneration."* It was certainly to his credit that when Voltaire and others were going back from natural religion, Hume, who had never professed it like them, should have stood out against the atheism of Parisian circles at the expense of raillery for his "prejudices." There does not seem, however, any ground for connecting the name of Hume with any such victory of faith, even in its philosophical sense, by a kind of *salto mortale*, over scepticism, as Jacobi, for example, might have connected with his system; least of all, however gladly we would believe it, in its highest meaning. In the face of any such supposition, the posthumous publication of the "Dialogues on Natural Religion," against the strongest advice of Adam Smith and other friends, would become a deeper mystery. But while so much of the career of this great thinker, in thought so clear, in heart so kindly, is on its spiritual side a darkness and a grief to Christian minds, let us remember the undoubted evidence of reaction and recoil from the gloom of doubt which no one has more eloquently expressed, and let us give as much acceptance as we can to the words uttered amidst the shock of his mother's death, and uttered as a reply to the charge of having broken with all Christian hope—"Though I throw out my speculations to entertain the learned and metaphysical world, yet in other things I do not think so differently from the rest of the world as you imagine."†

* Burton, ii., p. 183.

† Ibid., i., p. 294.

The only other name on which we need to touch, that of Gibbon, less as a thinker than Hume, but greater as an historian, has left a mark in literature which makes us feel how much smaller than these writers were the foremost we have in this lecture considered. Gibbon, too, lies outside their track, for he was born in 1737, when the stress of the controversy was past, and he died in 1794, when quite other thoughts were agitating the world, and driving men, himself included, back from negation to any possible hold of belief. He is here ranked with the sceptical rather than with any other school, not, as in the case of Hume, from any philosophical theory, but from a habit of mind. His conversion in his seventeenth year, and in the midst of his Oxford course, to Romanism casts a sad light upon the state of that university, and, indeed, of the Christianity of England, which had so little inspiration of faith, or even of learning, to preoccupy such a nature. Here, as always, scepticism, with or without a passage through credulity, is more or less the penalty and the fruit of foregoing unfaithfulness in the Church of Christ. Nor was there anything in the pale and waning moon of Continental Protestantism, by whose glimmering ray he returned from the maze, to enkindle and guide the recovered proselyte, whose career is henceforth liker that of Bayle than of Chillingworth, alive to the boundless interest of knowledge, but dead to all higher impulse. The world is to Gibbon, in the deepest sense, without a centre and without a plan; but its changing and checkered course has for him an unfathomable attraction; and by his power to reflect this, through multiplicity in unity, his knowledge and historical imagination enable him probably to surpass all historians. His unity is given him by the vastness of Rome and a certain tragic loftiness by its decay; and the immense procession sweeps through centuries, involving almost all mankind, of all races, faiths, and stages of civilization, without exhausting his interest or his sense of grandeur. It is here that Gibbon comes into contact with Christianity, furnishing in his "Decline and Fall," as it were, a negative of Church history, exhibiting the web on its reverse side, but faithful still to his duty towards it, so far at least as one of the great forces that have moved the world. This is not only true when he is dealing out justice to names like Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, and Chrysostom; but even where his aim is less friendly, and his color even malign, the impression of force and life in the Christian move-

ment is given back; and there is no more effectual, though reluctant, witness of its world-shaking, world-subduing power than Gibbon. No Christian, therefore, but will rejoice that, with its great faults on this side, a history like that of Gibbon has been written; and Christianity needs too much to have its infirmities, as a human product, displayed for its own correction, to quarrel even with its severest censor who challenges historical evidence for his accusations. In particular allegations Gibbon may have failed, but many of his charges hit some weak point, where Christianity is the better for the criticism; and if his general spirit be complained of, as, for example, in his sympathy with Mohammedanism rather than with so much higher a faith, this teaches the Church of Christ to remember its own corruption as the precursor of its defeat, while there is no more striking moral which Gibbon has unconsciously helped to point than the divine vitality, as since tested, of the one religion, while the other has been sinking into senility and exhaustion. In this point of view, or as a permanent measure of the strength and enduring resource of Christianity, the celebrated inquiry of Gibbon as to Secondary Causes of the success of Christianity has a special interest. Gibbon is illogical here, for the most of these causes—the monotheistic zeal, the faith in immortality, the virtue, the unity—were parts of Christianity needing themselves to be accounted for, while the miracles were, according to him, a spurious appendage, and thus could not long have wielded influence. But the starting and prosecuting of such an investigation raised Gibbon far above the Deistical school, who treated the whole phenomenon as beneath them, or summarily ascribed it to imbecility and imposture. In this respect Gibbon is the most modern of historians, as he had most of the historical sense; and the question which he raised is still pursued with the most eager efforts by those who endeavor to account for Christianity itself, and for its success, without affecting to believe, with Gibbon, "that it was owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of its great Author." *

It is worthy of notice that Gibbon, in his later years, like Hume, rather returns upon his own footsteps as a leader in the movement party throughout Europe. The political tendencies which had made him displeased with Christianity as an inno-

* Chap. xv., vol. ii., p. 2. Bohn's edition.

vation on polytheism filled him with alarm when the fruits of unsettlement appeared in the French Revolution. The freedom of thought which had looked so attractive in the gay *salons* of Paris wore a different aspect as it came near his Lausanne retreat in the shape of propagandist legions spreading like Huns and Vandals over Europe, and able too, like them, to beat the standing armies of order and civilization in pieces. The misgivings which he expresses in his letters to Lord and Lady Sheffield — his friendship with whom forms so interesting a feature in his biography—are significant of the yet deeper change which was soon to set in amid wide circles, and to ally itself, too often to its own sad disadvantage, with reaction. Meanwhile it is a striking proof of the sagacity of Gibbon, as of Hume, that they early foresaw, and from the opposite region of political sympathy, the invincibility of the great Commonwealth of the West, which was rising, not without its own earlier elements of unbelief and disorganization, to prove, and in so many and such unexpected ways, a bulwark of liberty and of Christian faith throughout the world.

It has been supposed that the Deistic movement, the history of which we have thus endeavored to trace, failed as an intellectual process by the development of scepticism, which thus turned it round against itself.* But this development was neither so considerable nor so manifest as thus to operate. The movement failed intellectually through exhaustion. The assaults had been repelled and the ammunition shot away; and nothing remained but to raise the siege. The Church of England, though sadly feeble and worldly, proved stronger than had been anticipated. She rose above her disputes, Arian and Bangorian, and presented a united front to the enemy, from Leslie on the extreme right, himself a Nonjuror, to Middleton on the extreme left, almost excommunicated as a freethinker. Her greatest names on this field equalled themselves on every other, and one on this alone added a name to the greatest in her history. Nor were the Dissenters less united with the Church and with themselves; and though suffering from spiritual blight and doctrinal coldness, men among them, like Leland and Sam-

* This is the supposition of Lechler, whose valuable work is arranged on this principle, but who fails, I think, in his instances, as Dodwell cannot be granted to him, nor the influence of Hume allowed to have acted so widely in this direction. Bolingbroke is not arranged by Lechler among the sceptics, and Gibbon is not noticed.

uel Chandler and Doddridge, maintained a not unequal competition with all but the greatest in the Anglican pale, while, from the more uncertain verge of Nonconformity, Hallet and Foster displayed their vigor of argument, and Lardner rose to an uncontested pre-eminence in learning. The best works of their antagonists, after the replies made to them, look poor and shallow, and hardly anything remains in Christianity to be struck at but the eternal difficulties of reason and of theology. Nor did the Deists fail through intellectual weakness alone. They wanted the elements of moral victory. They wanted a creed, a worship, a polity, a tradition. They wanted that without which success is nowhere possible in the moral field, and least of all in England—enthusiasm. The Reformation was not carried without men that would go to the stake, nor civil liberty without men that would rush to the field. No mere simplification of a belief has ever conquered, unless the half has burned more brightly than the whole. The Deists professed to improve religion, but they were without visible religion, without contagion, without courage. They suffered some unjust and unhappy persecution; but in comparison of what Puritans, Covenanters, Quakers, and even Romanists had braved, it was the fulness of religious liberty. They dared to put the watchwords of Tertullian and Lactantius on their title-pages, but within were too often innuendoes and salvoes, and dexterous conformities to the faith which they denied. Hence, whatever may have been the sincerity with which they pleaded, and with which one or two of them (to the regret of many Christians then, and of all now) suffered, they did not make on the public mind the impression of earnestness and resolve, and therefore they lost whatever advantage belonged to aggression and novelty. But the deepest cause of their failure was that they had not faith in a divine mission, such as was still found on the other side. This was a superstition which, with other remnants of traditional religion, they excluded. But it was the deepest element of strength in the upholders of revelation. Some of them may have opposed the Deists from love to an established religion; some from adherence to the past; some from mere contempt of intellectual inferiority. But that which was mightier than all, and kept the field, even amid the decay of faith, was this lingering presence of it, which had power with God, and, by a law of his making, with man also. Thus it was that what had honored God, amid depression and

darkness, was crowned with more than victory. Not only was the Deistic wave rolled back by the dikes opposed to it, but by a higher influence was made to fertilize the recovered soil. The beleaguered fortress was not only set free, but in its lowest depths was opened a spring of living water. In the rise of Methodism and other great impulses, it was found that one of the most derided of the evangelic miracles—the descent of the angel to heal stagnation by commotion and trouble—had been repeated, though not always owned by those who had waited for it; and in the brightening energy and hopefulness ere long sent forth by the living Spirit of God, from a country which had thus preserved the continuity of its religious history, over every branch of the Anglo-Saxon race and into all the world, it was felt that the weakness of Christianity had departed, and that a more heroic age had begun.

LECTURE IV.

UNBELIEF IN FRANCE.—THE ENCYCLOPEDISTS.

Causes of French Unbelief. — Persecution. — Jansenism. — Corruption in Church and State.—Voltaire: his Connection with England; Literary Career.—Frederick the Great.—The "Encyclopédie."—Jean Calas and Toleration.—Characteristics of Voltaire's Attack on Christianity.—Ignorance of Scripture.—Insufficient Account of the Origin and Success of Christianity.—Doubtful Natural Religion.—Hypocrisy of his last Confession.—Rousseau.—The Savoy Vicar.—Character of Jesus Christ.—Letters from the Mountain.—Concessions to Christianity. — Atheism. — La Mettrie. — Helvetius. — Diderot. — D'Holbach.—Revolution.—Causes of Failure of Encyclopedism.—Concordat.—Chateaubriand's "Génie du Christianisme."—Fruitless Strife of Rome and Unbelief.—Service of French Unbelief to England.

The unbelief which had failed in England passed over into France, there to work other results, and to open a career which is not yet exhausted. There was the most direct connection, as we shall see, between the movement in the one country and in the other, and the principal instrument of the success denied in England had found there his training and his materials. But had not the condition of things in France, both in the State and in the Church, been very different, neither the abilities of Voltaire and his associates, nor the weapons drawn by them from their English armory, could have dealt such a blow to the Christian faith, and accompanied it with so great a political revolution. Important as the moral elements were in the English struggle, in the French they were far more decisive; and to look upon this great passage in history chiefly as a theological debate between the assailants of Christianity and its defenders is to miss its spirit and all its most serious lessons.

While England was struggling through the seventeenth century to retain and develop its political liberty, France was sinking deeper and deeper in personal despotism; and when at length crushing disasters overwhelmed the proud fabric which Louis XIV. had reared, the general incompetency and misgovernment of those who succeeded him dispelled the last illusions which had surrounded arbitrary power, and not only took away

the prop which a strong government may prove to a national faith, but involved that faith in all the unpopularity of the weak and miserable rulers who represented it. It was as if the Deistical controversy had come in England in the reign of the Stuarts, and not in the happier days of Anne and of the Georges. Still more ominous of evil were the influences that had presided in France over the history of the Church. The long struggle of the Reformation, ended by the Bartholomew massacre and the conversion of Henry IV., had left France prevailingly Romish; and in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, the most tremendous blow ever dealt to a nation's spiritual life had been inflicted, driving out the *élite* of the Protestant middle class, and reacting upon the Church of Rome itself, so as to imprint upon it a character of narrowness and intolerance odious to many within its pale who were held responsible for that outrage. Not only was the Protestant part of the population, the most intelligently Christian, sadly diminished when the attack on Christianity began, but the Romish communion was ill at ease, and charged with the grave scandal, of which Christianity had to bear the burden. Another trouble had arisen, for the long dispute as to Grace, which, in the days of Pascal, had sought to make the French Church a home for the doctrine of Augustine and of Luther, had been by the Papal chair decided against the Jansenists; and the portion of the Romish body purest in life and doctrine weakened itself by empty protests which could avail nothing, and still more by the attempt in 1732 to work miracles at the Church of St. Médard in Paris—an attempt which revolted the sense of truth, threw the educated mind over into scepticism, and broke up also the Jansenist party itself. There had, no doubt, been in the Romish communion in the seventeenth century an amount of independence, of learning, and of piety never witnessed before or since. Its greatest preachers and controversialists then appeared; and in their sermons, their treatises, and their contests with the Reformed, or even with the Jesuit party in their own Church, displayed a vigor that must have filled the nation with interest and admiration. But Arnaud, Fénelon, Bossuet, and Massillon were gone, and had left no successors, as indeed Protestant opposition was now silent, if not dead; and how poor the resources of the Romish Church were, soon appeared in the replies made to the leaders of unbelief, which, with hardly an exception, wanted everything of the logical power, the Biblical

and classical knowledge, and even the wit and raillery, which shone in the combat against English Deism. Intellectual poverty, however, was the least fault of this hierarchy. It was corrupt to the core, the clergy in many cases belonging openly to the gay world. The evils of the monastic system were flagrant. The Church lands were oppressed by a worse serfdom than those of the feudal nobles; the tyranny in the State found in that of the Church its best support. Every proposal for reform was met by the sternest censorship, or by a *lettre de cachet* consigning to the Bastille. It was, indeed, quite natural that, among the clergy, many who had at first belonged to the party of repression should, with the progress of unbelief, be led over to adopt its liberal creed; but then, instead of, like the English Deists who had belonged to the sacred order, stepping outside, they allowed themselves to maintain a secret, and in some cases open, correspondence with the Sceptics, and to undermine the faith by which they were still supported. It was impossible to save from great and terrible convulsions a Church and a people which had retained so little of the preserving salt of Christian faith and purity. The assailants of the gospel assailed it laden with a dead weight of error, of superstition, of tyranny, and of worldliness, which it could not long bear up under; and as the people before whom they pleaded—with a mastery in literature and a daring vigor of reforming enterprise to which English Deism had nothing parallel—had no Bible in their hands, or Christian examples in any number before their eyes, or effectual counter-pleading sounded in their ears, it is not wonderful that they should at last have violently broken away from a Christianity which they could neither believe nor love, and have wandered so long afterwards in the very shadow of death, from which it cannot be said that they have yet emerged. This sad and monitory history is what we have now rapidly to consider, while we also keep in view the points of contrast between what was prominent in the struggle of the eighteenth century and what in France now meets the eye in our own.

We have to begin, then, with the name of Voltaire, who overtops every one besides in this revolution, and is in some respects the most remarkable figure in the history of unbelief. We must here abandon our threefold classification, striking out the division of Pantheists, as none such appeared in the French history, and adding to Deists and Sceptics the name of Atheists, which alone was avowed in this region. The stress of the

battle, however, is here, as elsewhere, borne by Deists or Sceptics; for the Atheists even here shun the light.

I. At the head of the Deists, or rather as uniting in himself the Deist and the Sceptic, is Voltaire. In these limits, only the briefest notice of his long and various life is to be expected, and exclusively in relation to this subject. Already more than a third part of his life, which extended from 1694 to 1778, had passed when, in 1726, being then in his thirty-second year, he came as an involuntary exile to England. His character was already formed, and his talents were recognized. Educated at the Jesuit College in Paris, he had deserted law for literature, and had written tragedies and other poems, among them the epic on the Wars of the League, which he had begun in the Bastille, whither, in mistaken punishment of a supposed libel on the Regent, he had been sent. In the fashionable world he was as much at home, and had, among many other high personages, become acquainted with Lord Bolingbroke, who then passed an interval of his troubled life on his estates in Touraine, and had, in 1722, nursed Voltaire during an attack of small-pox.* Thus introduced into England, Voltaire knew all that was foremost in literature. He met Pope, Congreve, and Gay, and corresponded with Swift. He conversed with Clarke and Berkeley. He mastered the Newtonian astronomy and the philosophy of Locke; and studied the English poets from Shakespeare downwards. He actually composed in English prose a portion of his own tragedy of "Brutus," and for more than two years studied the language so incessantly that, as he says, he forgot to think in his own.† The result was highly favorable to his mental culture and enlargement; but, unhappily, the influence of Bolingbroke made it disastrous in its bearing on religious opinion and conviction. There is the clearest evidence that long before this Voltaire had sunk into all the moral dissoluteness of the period of the Regency; but there is no evidence of formed sceptical opinions. These, however, his visit to England brought him; and instead of the best thing in

* Metrical Epistle to De Gervasy, the physician who had treated him for small-pox in 1722. Voltaire knew Bolingbroke at least by this time ("Œuvres de Voltaire," Amsterdam, 1752, vol. vi., p. 196).

† The authority for these statements is in the "Discourse on Tragedy" prefixed to "Brutus" and dedicated to Bolingbroke ("Œuvres de Voltaire," Amsterdam, 1738, vol. ii., p. 234).

the country, he took the worst. The debate on prophecy raised by Collins was in full career; that on miracles by Woolston was soon to begin. These were matter of universal talk; and Bolingbroke, who was then in England, would doubtless give him his own impressions of all that was taking place. This must also have been the case with English liberty; for though Voltaire admired this, and in regard to toleration as much as civil rights, in contrast with the political system of France, he received no idea of its connection with Puritanism and with moral forces. The letters which he soon after published on England, while handling the subject of religion, are fresh and impartial between sect and sect; but there is already a tone not only of coldness, but of ridicule, which shows the malignant influence of indifference and prejudice. The Deists are not, indeed, mentioned in that work; but they are afterwards—Toland, Collins, Chubb, and others; above all, Bolingbroke—and their works are ransacked for arguments against revelation, while not one of the numberless replies to them is ever noticed. This is quite in keeping with Voltaire's character. It may not have been deliberate suppression; but his controversial life was too rarely, and only as by accident, in harmony with the rule "Audi alteram partem." It was not till he was turned of seventy that, in a letter to D'Alembert, he mentions that he had just read Grotius.*

Much of the succeeding history of Voltaire must be passed over, such as his connection with Madame du Châtelet, which, though a scandal, was in other respects a recovery; and his intercourse with Frederick the Great, in which, perhaps, he sinks to the lowest depth in his whole career, ending his residence at Berlin in a violent quarrel, followed by something like reconciliation and renewed correspondence full of exalted professions, while all the while he kept in his desk a monstrous libel against the king, full of such insults as, had it then been published, must have swept away every trace of friendship. To this want of solid and trustworthy qualities he owed in part his exclusion from the circles where his commanding abilities still gave him influence, and his isolation during the last twenty years of his

* Correspondence with D'Alembert, date 5th April, 1765: "I must tell you I have just read Grotius's 'De Veritate.' I am astonished at the reputation of that man. I hardly know a more foolish book" ("Œuvres de Voltaire," Geneva edition, vol. xlii., p. 204).

life. This was the shade upon his retreat at Ferney, on the confines of France and Switzerland, whence he exerted a kind of literary dictatorship in Europe.

His earlier works had mostly ranked under the head of poetry, epic and dramatic; history, such as his greatest, "The Age of Louis XIV.," and his more extensive "General History from Charlemagne;" with numberless smaller pieces, belonging chiefly to the department of criticism. In these we may say that the distinctive stamp of Voltaire is not found, save in the range of knowledge and felicity of expression which have been acknowledged by all. But the peculiar features of his thinking and style come out most strikingly in the works of his last thirty years, roused up in the acts of his avowed conflict with Christianity, but also tinging largely the fiction and the correspondence drawn into this more serious enterprise. Painful as this region is to a Christian, and often also to a moralist, the literary power is at its highest. Here are mingled exposition, reasoning, sarcasm, anecdote, exhaustless faculty of invention, exaggeration, and mocking ridicule, all kept within classic rule, and winged with a classic art, though indeed of a French type, which has never been surpassed. The one element wanting is truth, though there is as much of the look of it as arose from genuine hatred of Rome, and, alas! also dislike of real Christianity. But the simplicity which dwells only with nature is wanting; and the deep humor of Luther and transcendent pathos of Pascal are denied. The pathos of Voltaire is mostly in his tragedies. The sorrows of humanity, though they have some place, have, with one or two honorable exceptions, a subordinate one, in this crusade. Of this vast and restless activity, the chief centre was the "Encyclopédie," which marked an era in French literature. This work was not begun as a mere propagandist organ, but as a *bona fide* repository of universal knowledge. But as many, if not most, of the contributors belonged to the school of which Voltaire was rising to be the recognized head, it naturally became more and more the vehicle of their opinions. It was started in 1751, when Voltaire was in Berlin; and its two editors were Diderot and D'Alembert, the former, who held on to the end, having charge of literature and art, and the latter of science and philosophy, while many articles on theology and morals were contributed by learned abbés and professors belonging to the more advanced schools, such as the Abbé Mallet, the Abbé Morellet, the Abbé Yvon,

and others. It would be a mistake to suppose that the "Encyclopédie" preached atheism, or even open disloyalty to Christ. On the contrary, the article "Athée," furnished by M. Formey, of the Royal Academy of Prussia, holds atheism to be a State crime punishable with death; while that on "Jésus-Christ" declares "that, to speak rigorously, Jesus Christ was not a philosopher: he was a God." These and many similar passages are but the "tares among the wheat," of which Voltaire sometimes in his letters to D'Alembert complains, exhorting him "to cultivate the vineyard of the Lord;" and we can see how effectually it is cultivated, by dwelling on the difficulties of Christianity, insinuating doubts not only of Romish but of all Christian doctrine, putting forward the scandals and controversies of the Christian Church, and exalting the light, clearness, and opening millennium of reason. Much of this great work was, no doubt, unaffected by special unbelief; but its purely scientific articles were like solid walls that received the inscriptions of unbelief, or gave back its mocking voice within. The publication of the "Encyclopédie" fell into two periods. Of its seventeen volumes the first seven, from 1751 to 1757, ran on under privilege of the king in Paris; but, offence having been taken, the remaining ten volumes were prepared and published in one issue, professedly at Neufchâtel, but really in Paris, in 1765, and without any editor's name, save in asterisks—those of Diderot and D'Alembert, which had stood upon the first issue, being concealed.* Before this second part of the work had been undertaken, Voltaire had become a voluminous contributor to it, but chiefly on questions of literature and taste. He had also, in 1752, while still at Potsdam, begun a Dictionary of his own, more free; and added in 1770 "Questions on the Encyclopédie," filling up gaps in that publication. These, with his actual contributions, make the work known as his "Philosophical Dictionary." In these papers his most unrestrained hostility to Christianity comes out, though it must be allowed that, on purely literary and historical subjects, his remarks are often just and instructive. To the same period belong his "Philosophical Dialogues," and most of his philosoph-

* These statements I make from a personal examination of the original edition in the National Library at Paris. For the misleading statement as to the publication at Neufchâtel, I rest on the authority of Mr. Morley, in his "Life of Diderot."

ical romances, such as "Candide," the most lively and offensive of them all, written to ridicule the thesis of Leibnitz, that this is the best of all possible worlds. To the same period is to be referred the saying, which both Condorcet and Strauss accept as genuine, "Je suis las de leur entendre répéter que douze hommes ont suffit pour établir le christianisme, et j'ai envie de leur prouver quil n'en faut q'un pour le détruire."* In a letter to D'Alembert he starts the same idea, only asking a confederacy of five or six to prevail at successive points in the contest.† These boasts only prove now the vitality of that religion, whose weakness is stronger than men.

It would have been impossible, however, for Voltaire to have wielded the mighty influence which gathered around his name, had there not been in him elements of earnestness capable of being roused up into strong action, and which visibly connected themselves with human well-being. In this he had a career which the English Deists wanted, and which, to his honor, he embraced, in making himself the reformer of the civil law, and the antagonist of intolerance and cruelty under the name of religion. There were three remarkable cases in which, by courageous and sustained efforts, he stirred up and led the public feeling of France and of Europe so as to gain his cause. The first was that of *Jean Calas*, in Toulouse, in 1762, a Protestant merchant, who, for the supposed murder of a son to hinder him from going over to Rome—though entirely innocent—had, with his whole family, shared the tortures of the rack, and had then himself been broken on the wheel and burned to ashes. His widow interested Voltaire in the case, and after a three years' struggle he prevailed over fanaticism, so that the authorities of Toulouse were visited with the royal displeasure. The second case—that of a family of the name of *Sirven*, in the same neighborhood—so greatly resembled that of Calas as to require no further notice; and the third was that of two young gentlemen of family in Abbeville, in the north of France, who for an alleged insult to a crucifix, and to a religious procession,

* "I am weary of hearing them repeat that twelve men were enough to establish Christianity, and I long to prove to them that it needs but one to destroy it" (Condorcet's "Vie de Voltaire," Œuvres, Geneva edition, vol. xxxiv., p. 169. Strauss, "Voltaire," third edition, p. 282).

† The idea is thrown out in regard to the election of Diderot to the Academy; but that is only a means to the greater end ("Correspondance," July 24, 1760, vol. xlii., p. 78).

and other marks of irreverence, had been sentenced to torture and death, though one escaped by flight, and the other only was executed. This barbarous vengeance for purely religious offences Voltaire denounced with the utmost energy, but only succeeded in moving public opinion, without changing in this case the sentence. These acts of Voltaire's life provoke the exclamation, "*O si sic omnia!*" They teach us also to make just allowance even for his mournful recoil from a Christianity associated with such horrors, and lead us to see what so impure a Christianity had to suffer in the fires of revolution, before dross like this could have even a chance of being purged away. It is interesting to see how Voltaire, as the apostle of toleration, makes out in his pleading a better case for Christianity than at any other time. The Old and New Testaments become suddenly replete, as he cites them, with mildness and mercy; and even Athanasius and Bernard preach lessons of good-will and brotherhood.

It is necessary here to take some account of the Propagandist literature, which, with many repetitions and not a few contradictions, marks the final period of Voltaire's life. We shall separate all that is purely anti-Romish, or directed against abuses of Romanism, and shall limit our view to what is hostile to Christianity in general, or even to natural religion. The exceptions which may be taken to Voltaire's judgment of Christianity I endeavor to put into the most moderate form consistent with truth.

1. There is, then, first of all, in this literature an *unaccountable ignorance of the literary history and contents of the Bible, and unfairness in dealing with it.* In his article "Évangile," in his "Dictionnaire," he says, "It is a constant truth, whatever Abbadie may say, that none of the first fathers of the Church, to Irenæus inclusive, cites a single passage of the four Gospels which we know." Now, without arguing the point as to earlier fathers, the citations of Irenæus are universally acknowledged; and even his reasons, fanciful enough, why there could be only four Gospels, were a commonplace of Church history. He also gives as an example of the fathers quoting apocryphal Gospels, while neglecting the true, a saying of our Lord cited by Clement, which we know was in the Gospel according to the Egyptians. Voltaire does not distinguish which Clement he means, of Rome, or of Alexandria. Had Voltaire studied

the subject at all, he would have found that the second epistle ascribed to Clement of Rome was rejected by all the best scholars, and that Clement of Alexandria expressly distinguishes the saying as not in the four Gospels.* Wholly ignorant of Celsus, he speaks as if the Gospels were hardly known to the pagans till the time of Diocletian. Again, in his "Dialogues"† he speaks of "the fanatic who redacted the Epistles of Paul," quoting a passage from 2d Thessalonians; but he might have known that Paul's Epistles were not thus to be summarily disposed of, since even the Tübingen school in our days (and the evidence was a century ago the same) admit the first four from the Romans onward, and Renan grants that the Epistles to the Thessalonians are unjustly, and on slight grounds, denied to Paul. Along with this scepticism as to the Bible, Voltaire accepts other ancient books with little incredulity. "Sanchoniathon lived certainly before the time when we place Moses."‡ So also he accepts the "Zend-avesta," as proving that the Jews derived their doctrine of angels from the Persians, in the days of the Captivity, though he says of this very book that one "cannot read two pages of the abominable trash ascribed to this Zoroaster without having compassion on human nature."§ There is also wonderful ignorance of Bible facts. He goes so far in one of his "Dialogues"‖ as to say that Jesus "could neither read nor write;" though, if the history be worth anything, the appeals of Jesus to the Old Testament set aside the allegation. In his "Pierre" he makes Peter defend himself before Paul against the charge, not of withdrawing from the Gentiles, but of eating with them; and he brings in Peter's vision of the sheet as a part of his defence, then and there, in Antioch, whereas it had been adduced long before, and to a different audience, in Jerusalem. Again, he blames "Paul" for circumcising Timothy, *after* he had written to the Galatians, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing," whereas Timothy was circumcised some time *before* the Epistle was written. Whoever will follow Voltaire in matters of Scripture fact, and correct him, has work on hand. He should have remembered that higher interests were here at stake than in the process of Jean Calas, where the necessity of proof kept him accurate. Who can calculate the effect of

* Clem. Alex., "Strom.," iii., § 93. † II., p. 15. ‡ Article "Adam."
§ Articles "Ange" and "Zoroastre." ‖ II., p. 162.

such recklessness in a country where the Bible is a rare book, and where such a writer can make any assertion current?

2. It is to be said, *secondly*, that Voltaire's scheme of Christianity, including his theory of its success and influence, is *incoherent*. It is hard, indeed, to keep him to any one line; but perhaps the most elaborate of his attempts is in the long essay "Dieu et les Hommes."* Here he teaches that Jesus was a Jewish moralist, a "rustic Socrates," "a well-meaning enthusiast, a good man, who had the weakness to wish to be spoken of, and who did not love the priests of his day."† He never thought of founding the Christian sect, but lived and died an orthodox Jew, preaching only love to God and men. Who, then, founded it? None of his disciples; for they too, even Paul, save where he contradicts himself, keep within the limits of the Old Testament, and the fourth Gospel is not an early Christian writing. Where, then, did this foundling religion, cast adrift by its author, find a home, an education, and a second and worse birth? In Alexandria; but when or by what new apostles transformed, Voltaire does not show. This theory, running down from Bolingbroke to Strauss, though disagreeing with them both as to Paul — a theory which makes Plato the real father of Christianity, and Philo its unconscious godfather—is contradicted at every point—by the absence of sufficiently evangelic elements in Plato; by the presence of alleged Platonic elements from the beginning in Christianity, as reflected in the Synoptic Gospels; by the existence of an early Christian theology in declared separation from Platonism, as in Justin Martyr; and by the antipathy of the New-Platonists to distinctive Christianity. How Platonism should condescend to the name of a rejected and crucified Jewish rabbi, or how his disciples, keeping for a generation to strictly Jewish paths, should then transform his doctrine into its opposite, is left wholly unexplained, and still less is the success of the attempt accounted for. Voltaire, indeed, brings in, like Gibbon and Renan, the belief in a millennium; but this had nothing specially Platonic, as the most Platonizing minds in the Church were most averse to it; and hence Voltaire, almost laying this aside, grants that the belief of a resurrection

* "Dieu et les Hommes," vol. xx., p. 1–154, Geneva edition.
† Ibid., p. 110, p. 102.

connected with it is revolting.* There really then remains nothing; and Voltaire, who knew enough of crowned heads to understand that Constantine did not profess the faith of Christ through Platonism, or sense of the apparent end of the world, can only say that he was bought over, and that "the money of the Christians made him emperor."† The success of Christianity is thus for no one a harder problem than for Voltaire. The doctrine is odious, and the morality commonplace; since every lawgiver must enjoin virtue, "every religion," says he, "has said as much about it as Jesus."‡ This falls below Gibbon, who makes Christian morality a cause of success; and the question recurs, how a religion, with so little pith and substance, made its way. This shows how little, in the deepest sense, Voltaire was a great historian. He is dazzled by the grand empires of China, India, and Western Asia; and the Jews are in comparison a race of brigands and slaves. Jesus comes and is equally weak. "Do you charge God with being made man in vain, with having raised the dead, only to be hanged (*pendu*)?"§ Voltaire has thus no eye for Pascal's greatness of the third order, for Milton's "unresistible might of weakness," for "the corn of wheat that falls into the ground and dies so as to bring forth much fruit." And yet, while reducing Christ to a pale and ineffectual moralist, let us do Voltaire the justice of acknowledging that he thus liberates himself from the charge of personal rancor against him. As Christ is not the author of Christianity, Voltaire, though sometimes permitting himself to depreciate him as fanatically expecting to come in the clouds, or weakly sweating blood, still absolves him from the crimes done in his name. This is one of the reasons why I agree with Strauss, that the well-known watchword, *Écrasez l'Infâme*, which also is connected with feminine pronouns, does not refer to Jesus personally, but to superstition, or to the Christian Church as an embodiment of it. There is enough, that is violent and even virulent, to make us thankful to be able, conscientiously, to grant such an abatement; though, no doubt, Voltaire included in his "Infâme" much that belonged to the Saviour, albeit darkened in his followers by human evil. Even against the Christian Church Voltaire sinned; for, with all her faults, as every negative

* "Dieu et les Hommes," vol. xx., p. 123, Geneva edition.
† Ibid., p. 123. ‡ "Dialogues," ii. 65. § Ibid., p. 21.

thinker of the present day that is worth arguing with will own, the Christian Church has familiarized society with ideas of purity, tenderness, and self-sacrifice, before absent, and diffused a sense of truth and right, such as Voltaire himself could appeal to against her, unknown in ancient Greece and Rome.*

3. As a *third* and last exception to Voltaire's scheme, as opposed to Christianity, I mention his *scanty and doubtful recognition of natural religion.* The question here comes up, and one which it is not easy to decide, whether Voltaire, in his deepest sense, is a theist or a sceptic. A theist of the style of Lord Herbert he certainly is not, as the question of worship would never have been made a separate point by him, but set forth as conformity with existing rites, or more probably be resolved into the practice of virtue; and, further, the question of repentance being a satisfaction for sin, is hardly, if at all, raised, as sin against God and repentance have hardly a place in Voltaire's voluminous writings. We come then to the Kantian triad — God, Virtue, and Immortality. Certainly, if Voltaire holds any one of those firmly, it is the first; and yet here there are difficulties. In spite of his sounding line,

"Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer,"

and many earnest and eloquent pleadings for a designing mind against those who denied final causes, there are shades of uncertainty that trouble the horizon. All along he seems to have held the view of Bolingbroke that we cannot rise to the attributes of God from his works. This appears in his first "Traité de Métaphysique," written for the instruction of Madame du Châtelet, where he gets rid of objections to the existence of God by pleading this ignorance of his character;† and in one of his later works (article "Dieu" in his "Dictionnaire") he almost seems to carry this so far as to affect the argument from design itself, ridiculing the idea by supposing that a mole, seeing a garden-house, might thus conclude that it was put up by an immense mole, or a may-fly infer, in like manner, a gifted may-fly. He elsewhere carries this further by imagining that rats, finding a lodgment in the timbers of a ship, might be

* For the phrase *Écrasez l'Infâme*, see the correspondence with D'Alembert, *passim*. The reasoning of Strauss is in his "Voltaire," p. 280, 281. Strauss is not here original.

† Vol. xxxii., p. 499.

equally warranted to conclude that it was built and sent to sea for their benefit.* This may be only one of the extravagances of his ridicule, but any theism that rejected the analogy between man's highest nature and God, necessarily reposed on unsafe foundations. With regard to virtue, the downward tendency is still more visible. Rejecting the view of liberty which he had defended in his earlier correspondence with Frederick the Great, he adopts not philosophical necessity, as it has been held by many great philosophers and theologians, but something like fatalism, as is plain from these words in his article "Destin:" "We know well that it depends no more on us to have much merit and great talents than to have well-set hair and fine hands." "I have necessarily the passion to write this, you the passion to condemn it; we are both equally fools, equally the playthings of destiny." Voltaire would thus unsay all his own reproaches against the Bible, as having any absolute worth. In the article "Identité," he throws doubt on whether man can be punished hereafter for what he has forgotten; thus excluding the idea of responsibility as cleaving to the agent not only here (which he grants under human government), but hereafter (under divine), which he doubts or denies. This leads us to the third point—Immortality, where he is, if possible, still more unsatisfactory. Though he nowhere pleads strongly for it, he regards it as a sublime thing for the soul of man to hope for conjunction with the Eternal Being; but elsewhere he almost scouts the idea of it surviving the body. "When I am asked if after death these faculties subsist, I am almost tempted to ask in turn, if the song of the nightingale subsists when the bird has been devoured by an eagle."† These doubts as to immortality Condorcet, his first biographer, admits in almost the closing passage of his Memoir;‡ and Strauss, who has admitted also the darkness that is left by him on the moral character of God, and the tendency of his system to fatalism, sees in a letter to Madame du Deffand, six years be-

* I regret that I have lost the reference to this passage, and in the voluminous writings of Voltaire cannot recover it.

† "Dialogues," ii., p. 97.

‡ The words of Condorcet are these: "He remained in an almost absolute uncertainty as to the spirituality of the soul, and even its permanence after the body; but as he believed this last opinion useful, like that of the existence of God, he rarely allowed himself to show his doubts, and almost always insisted more on the proofs than the objections" (vol. xxxiv., p. 206).

fore his death, which touches on immortality, "that mixture of pessimism, scepticism, and irony that marks the peculiar stamp of his mind and character." *

It is with profound regret that one sees Voltaire thus relaxing his hold on those truths which lie at the foundation of all religion, and to which, had his testimony been continued, it might, in the country where his influence was greatest, have assisted escape from his other fatal errors. How little he himself was contented with his own results appears in the gloom shed over his later writings. It is not in "Candide" alone, but in others of them, that this sadness comes to light. Thus, in his dialogue "Les Louanges de Dieu," the doubter almost carries it over the adorer—"Strike out a few sages, and the crowd of human beings is nothing but a horrible assemblage of unfortunate criminals, and the globe contains nothing but corpses. I tremble to have to complain once more of the Being of beings in casting an attentive eye over this terrible picture. I wish I had never been born." † The other ends the dialogue in a hardly more reassuring strain: "I have never denied that there are great evils on our globe; there are, doubtless: we are in a storm, save himself who can, but still let us hope for better days! Where or when? I know not; but if everything is necessary, it is so that the great Being is possessed of goodness. The box of Pandora is the most beautiful fable of antiquity. Hope was at the bottom." ‡ Thus the last utterance of Voltaire's system is a groan. "The end of that mirth is heaviness." The self-complacent dream of human perfectibility which had led him so many years before so rudely to reject Pascal's reduction of human nature to two elements—greatness and misery—has vanished. The greatness is gone, the misery alone remains.

It is a necessary, however unwelcome, task to recall one of the incidents of Voltaire's last days. He had returned to Paris in 1778, at the age of eighty-four, only to die. The immense outburst of enthusiasm, overtasking his feeble strength, with innumerable demands of labor, brought the last shadow over all this splendor. At other times the idol has crushed the worshippers, but here the worshippers crushed the idol. He had to face the question whether he would renounce the funeral

* Strauss's "Voltaire," p. 253.
† "Dialogues," ii., p. 194.
‡ Ibid., p. 200.

honors which a straightforward adherence to conviction and profession would forfeit, or whether he would renew those compliances which he had made when he sought by favor of the Jesuits to enter the Academy, when he built a Church at Ferney with the inscription "Deo erexit Voltaire," and when repeatedly he partook of the Communion, and even, after a struggle upon the question of legal right, forced the parish priest to yield the point of admission to it. Now he had not the moral courage to avoid a duplicity which in this matter he had himself condemned, and hence the miserable scenes which followed; the first confession, still extant, in which he professed to die in the faith of the Church in which he had been born, and asked pardon of God and her for any scandal he had ever given; the attempted second confession, interrupted by the attempt of the priest to secure a testimony to Christ's divinity, which Voltaire repelled with the sad last words, "In the name of God, sir, speak to me no more of that man, and suffer me to die in peace;" and the struggle over the mortal remains to achieve or hinder their interment, ended by the hasty retreat to Scellières, where the coveted rites, all but too late, were secured. What impartial man will say that acts like these, any more than the funeral mass which was dictated for him by Frederick in Berlin, where he was supreme, were worthy of a leader of human thought, a teacher of the world in truth and righteousness? Let superstition bear the blame of surrounding the last rites, on their spiritual side, with an unreal and mischievous importance. Let intolerance incur the odium of making them, on their civil side, depend on any restriction of sect, confession, or opinion. Whatever of this kind can be said in exculpation of Voltaire (and it does not appear that much can be said), let it be weighed. But on the whole case, no leader of belief or unbelief ever inflicted on it a worse stigma, or did anything which tended more to efface those clear boundaries between truth and hypocrisy which orthodox and heterodox must alike regard. The conscience of the world will not absolve the recreant Christian confessor; and not less the champion of emancipation, who shrinks in the last crisis from the testimony of a lifetime, writes on his name reprobation and failure.*

* The documents connected with Voltaire's confessions and funeral are given in the Appendix to Condorcet's "Vie de Voltaire," Beuchot's edition. Paris, Didot, 1834. The first and only completed confession has

II. It would be easy to give a list of French writers who occupy nearly the same position in regard to Theism, and hence to Christianity, with Voltaire. But it is more necessary to sketch the character and opinions of those who differ, while still rejecting Christianity, and it will be universally acknowledged that of these the most influential is Rousseau. He is in some respects much nearer Christianity; but as he also distinctly rejects it as commonly held, and on the other side atheism, and even scepticism or imperfect Theism like that of Voltaire, it only remains to put him among the Theists, or, if we will, Deists, though Rousseau gives no evidence of familiarity with English Deism, and would probably have refused the name. He is as original in his religious opinions as in the rest of his history; and while exerting by these opinions a disastrous influence, which has not ceased, it is separate from the crusade-like movement of which Voltaire is the centre. In truth, Voltaire and Rousseau are as different as two great literary men of the same age and language, and general accord in what of religion they rejected, could well be. Voltaire is a *philosophe;* Rousseau is an enthusiast. Voltaire sees men as figures in a drama, or in the light of some theory, with little sense of outward nature; Rousseau opens up new interest in men as men, and has almost created the sense of nature in French literature. Voltaire, as a political reformer, is more a destroyer of abuses; Rousseau, as exalting the equality of man with man, while indirectly ministering to socialism, has given a positive impulse to human liberty. Voltaire, in dealing with Christianity, has proceeded against it more in the way of criticism and sarcasm; Rousseau, led mainly by sentiment, has done it so far homage, but, by the same sentiment exaggerated, has shut out its usual evidence. Both unhappily have grievous vices, with which living Christianity was incompatible; and in Rousseau there is morbid self-revelation almost akin, as other parts of his career,

been given as translated above. The original is dated 2d March, and is in these words, "Je meurs dans la sainte religion catholique où je suis né, espérant de la miséricorde divine qu'elle daignera pardonner toutes mes fautes; et si j'avais jamais scandalisé l'église, j'en demande pardon à Dieu et à elle," p. 431. The confession of an opposite tenor, which Strauss prints ("Voltaire," p. 341), and which he says was designed to satisfy his attendant Wagnière, who was startled by his master's recantation, does not relieve matters, as Strauss admits the genuineness of the ecclesiastical document. Besides, the Deistic one is the first in date, 28th February, 1778.

to madness. But there is in him, with all his sad faults, no mockery of things sacred, and the incredible ignorance of Voltaire has in Rousseau, as naturally in an educated Protestant, no place. Let it be added that much in Rousseau leads back to Christianity, and much can be said to show that he wished anything rather than to reject it. After the full account of Voltaire given, the notice of Rousseau may be more brief.

Rousseau (1712–1778) speaks warmly of his Christian education; but there is little trace of positive Christian doctrine in what he tells us of his father and of his aunts; and we may fear that already by his day the old Genevan theology had given place to a coldly moral discipline. His sudden change for the worse as an apprentice, his misadventures, and his flight into Savoy, where he falls into the hands of Rome, open the tragedy of his life. His conversion to Romanism at Turin, in his sixteenth year, is not to be ranked with that of Bayle or Gibbon. It is only one adventure more in his erratic and aimless career; and his return to Protestantism, a quarter of a century afterwards (1754), is marked by the same *sangfroid*, and is ascribed by its author to a desire to rehabilitate himself in his rights as a Swiss Protestant, and to a belief that the religion of the citizen should follow that of the country. Whatever liberty may be associated with his name, religious liberty is not of the species, unless it be the liberty of indifference in regard to any very dogmatic view of Christianity. There is nothing steadfast even in the warmest of his irregular connections; and the sending of his children to the Foundling Hospital, even though justified by the alleged parallel of Plato's ideal commonwealth, has not by any of his critics been approved. Almost every literary association formed by him is sooner or later broken up; and without wading through these voluminous quarrels with Voltaire, with Diderot, with Hume, and with most of his high-placed protectors, male and female, there is evidence enough of irritability and changefulness to make the exalted strain of every opening friendship, as contrasted with the closing tone—in which the whole world is represented as conspiring against the unhappy solitary, and tempting him into evil communications to his ruin—sad and humbling. Yet, so great is the genius of Rousseau, and such his mastery of all the resources of the French language, that, notwithstanding all that is mean and repulsive in the self-drawn picture of a life of impulse and passion, without victorious principle—notwithstanding the wild

preference of the state of nature to that of civilization, and other paradoxes of his political writings, redeemed though these are by the measure of truth in his "Contrat Social," and notwithstanding the boundless mirage of unreality which floats around and seems to take up into itself the portion of fresh and living water found in the "Héloïse" and the "Émile," his works live as those of Voltaire do not, nor even in the time of his greatest popularity seem to have done. It is the testimony of David Hume, speaking of the time when his own ill-advised connection with Rousseau began in 1766, "Voltaire and everybody else are quite eclipsed by him."* And yet by this time all the scandal that was possible had been given, both by his democratic and religious opinions, which led to his expulsion from France after the publication of his "Émile," in 1762, and from Switzerland in 1765. His later years, after his return in 1767 from England, where he wrote his "Confessions," are for a time as unquiet and wandering as ever; and when at last he settles down in Paris for the last period of his life, from 1770 to 1778, there is a deepening of his seclusion, a gradual progress, in spite of occasional literary production, of his mental eccentricity, and at length, little more than a month after Voltaire, and at an age younger by eighteen years, an entrance into the same shadow of death. Madame du Deffand, the life-long friend of Voltaire (though no friend of Rousseau), conjoins them in a letter written four days before Rousseau's decease, in a style which shows how little of real heart there was in that brilliant circle in which Voltaire had been so lately all but deified, and the "Confessions" of Rousseau were "the rage of the world." "There is no longer any question of J. Jacques or of his 'Memoirs;' nobody knows where all that is gone to. Voltaire is as much forgotten as if he had never appeared; the Encyclopedists would have liked him to live at least some months longer; he had a scheme for making the Academy more useful; he was the leader for all the pretended *beaux esprits*, whose design is to become a corporate body, like the noblesse, the clergy, the gown, etc."† The Christian Church will not thus treat men of such intellectual magnitude, and, while deploring and opposing their errors, will do justice to their powers, and to whatever services they have rendered to mankind.

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* Burton's "Life of Hume," vol. ii., p. 229.

† "Letters to Horace Walpole," vol. iii., p. 365.

The vehicle which Rousseau has chosen for the fullest utterance of his creed is the "Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard," which he has wrought into the treatise or romance on education called "Émile." It is not the less characteristic of him that this profession of exalted faith and virtue is put into the mouth of a character made up, by his own acknowledgment, of the lineaments of two priests known by him in his Turin and Savoy adventures, one of whom was degraded for immorality, while the other, who speaks as vicar, professes only to conform to the Catholic Church, and to administer its sacraments, in the sense of natural religion.* With these grave abatements, the defence of natural religion in the beginning of the fourth book of the "Émile" is not only eloquent, but solid. The protests against atheism, against materialism and the mortality of the soul, and against a life given up to impulse and selfishness, without conscience here and retribution hereafter, have rarely been more strongly stated. There is one passage on the being of God which deserves special notice. "The first and the most common view is the most simple and reasonable, and to unite all suffrages needed only to be proposed last. Imagine all your philosophers, ancient and modern, to have first exhausted their eccentric systems of forces, of chance, of fatality, of necessity, of atoms, of an animated world, of a living matter, of materialism of every kind; and that, after them all, the illustrious Clarke enlightens the world by announcing finally the Being of beings and the Disposer of events; with what universal admiration, with what unanimous applause, would not this new system have been received—so grand, so consoling, so sublime, so fitted to exalt the soul, to give a basis to virtue, and at the same time so striking, so luminous, so simple, and, as it seems to me, offering fewer things incomprehensible to the human mind, than one finds of absurdities in every other system. I said to myself, 'The insoluble objections are common to all, because the human mind is too limited to explain them; they prove nothing against any one in particular; but what a difference in the direct proofs!' Ought not, therefore, that scheme

* The names of these two priests—Gaime and Gâtier—are thus vouched for by Rousseau on the same page of his "Confessions" where stands the record of the offence of one of them—"Reunissant M. Gâtier avec M. Gaime, je fis de ces deux dignes prêtres l'original du vicaire Savoyard" ("Œuvres de Rousseau," vol. i., p. 205, Paris edition, 1822).

alone to be preferred which explains everything, and has no more difficulty than the rest?"*

Thus far Rousseau, in this work, argues powerfully for the general foundation of theism, pleading also for moral government, though not professing, by the light of nature, to settle all questions regarding penalty in a future life, and only coming short by speaking doubtfully of the need of prayer. In the same spirit he protests energetically in a letter to Voltaire, called forth by his poem on the Lisbon earthquake, against the scepticism founded by him on the presence of evil in the present world.† But when we come back in the "Émile," which has defended so ably natural religion, to Rousseau's examination of the claims of revelation, the eloquence remains, but the reasoning is gone. His principal difficulties are two—the non-universality of revelation, and the impossibility of conveying it by the medium of a book with clearness and certainty. Here we are back to Tindal, but to Tindal in a manner exalted and made passionate beyond himself. Yet Rousseau really adds nothing to what was so well met on the English soil.

With regard to the non-universality of revelation, Rousseau always argues as if those who wanted it would be judged like those who have it. He admits the inequalities in Providence; few had felt them more: but why may not this one be added, even under the government of God, that some have not his most precious gift, or have it not yet? and would there be any other way to redress this inequality but to clear all sin instantly out of this world, or bring all others down to its level? If there be mystery in the disease, why not in the application and success of the remedy? and may there not be in this arrangement a hidden goodness greater than the apparent restraint? These are the chief difficulties, as relative to God; and then, with regard to the non-transmissibility of revelation, as relative to man, Rousseau is equally inconclusive. His argument really comes to this, that revelation is not possible, even though God should wish it; for as the first truths are cognizable to all intuitively, no other truths, as truths of religion, can rise to the same rank. But why need they rise to the same rank in order to be effectual? A fact of history does not need to be a fact of consciousness in order to be believed, and to be mightily in-

* Œuvres, "Émile," vol. ix., p. 20.

† Œuvres, "Correspondance," 18th August, 1756, vol. xvii., pp. 250–276. This is one of the most interesting letters in the collection.

fluential. Miracles and prophecy are credible, even to the vulgar, by the moral greatness of the matter in which they are embedded, and which at once gives support to them and receives it from them; not to say that the stupendous effects of Christianity itself are a kind of miracles visible to the most ignorant. If Rousseau appeals to facts of nature, then Christians appeal to facts of grace—facts of a second and better nature; and though these facts are not equal evidence to all, they are enough to those into whose experience they enter, while they have also a voice to others. Nor is it worthy of a great writer to object to revelation because lodged ultimately in a book; for this is to repeat the error of rejecting God in civilization, because he is also primarily manifested in nature, and to deny to him that organ of literature which is the most powerful among men. The difficulties of translations, various readings, diversities among the authors themselves, do not forbid the idea of revelation. Rousseau here acts like a sophist of his old communion, who, to frighten the simple Protestant, descants on dark figures, mutilated books of Scripture, and lost writings that may possibly have contradicted those we still have; as if the vast multitude of Christians who really use it did not believe in a Bible, which in its parts is vital and saving as well as in the whole, which is superior in its central lessons to all the errors of editors and translators, and which can even convey eternal life by its reproduction in sermons, however weak, that are faithful to its spirit, though they do not literally give back one of its sentences. Rousseau would not have required to read all the "Encyclopédie" before he caught its general drift; nor did that work lose its unity to those who were ignorant of its detailed authorship. He says in one of his letters, in regard to the Bible, "I have told you many times over, nobody in the world respects the gospel more than I; it is, to my taste, the most sublime of all books; when all others tire me, I take it up again with always new pleasure; and when all human consolations have failed me, I have never sought those which it gives in vain."* Suppose, then, that this had gone further, and that, as an ordinary Christian, Rousseau had found in this book all that a Christian finds in it, where would have been his own assertion, in regard to a book so exceptional and transcendent,

* This letter is to M. Vernes of Geneva, of date March 25, 1758, vol. xvii., p. 383.

that its origin was a matter of obscure criticism, sufficient to occupy a whole lifetime, and requiring us to go to Jerusalem and to Mecca and the ends of the earth, to compare it minutely with all other professed revelations, so that, in his own words, "it would be much for us, if before death came we had learned in what faith we ought to have lived."*

But Rousseau does not stop with his formidable enumeration of difficulties. That unreserve which, with all his depravation and moral weakness, also belonged to his nature leads him honestly to state the internal evidence of the gospel as it impressed him; and hence that wonderful passage, which is the most striking tribute in the history of unbelief, or half-belief, to Christianity. "I avow to you also that the holiness of the gospel is an argument that speaks to my heart, and to which I should even regret to find any good reply. See the books of philosophers, with all their pomp; how little they are beside this! Can a book at once so sublime and so simple be the work of men? Is it possible that he whose history it is can be a man himself? Is this the tone of an enthusiast or of an ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity, in his manners; what touching grace in his instructions; what elevation in his maxims; what profound wisdom in his discourses; what presence of mind; what delicacy and what justness in his replies; what empire over his passions! Where is the man, where is the sage, who knows to act, to suffer, and to die, without weakness and without ostentation? When Plato paints his ideal man covered with every reproach of crime, and worthy of all the rewards of virtue, he paints, feature after feature, Jesus Christ: the resemblance is so striking that all the fathers have felt it, and it is not possible for any one to mistake it. What prejudices, what blindness, are not required to make any one venture to compare the son of Sophroniscus with the Son of Mary? What a distance between the one and the other! Socrates, dying without pain, without ignominy, easily sustains to the end his character; and if that gentler death had not honored his life, one doubts if Socrates, with all his genius, would have been other than a sophist. He discovered, it is said, morality; others before him had put it in practice. He did nothing more than say what they had done; he but reduced their examples to the form of lessons. Aristides had

* "Émile," book iv., Œuvres, vol. ix., p. 112.

been just before Socrates had said what justice was. Leonidas had died for his country before Socrates had made the love of country a duty. Sparta was sober before Socrates had praised sobriety; before he had defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where had Jesus found, among his countrymen, that pure and exalted morality of which he alone has held forth the lessons and the example? In the bosom of the most violent fanaticism, the loftiest wisdom made itself heard, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues honored the meanest of all peoples. The death of Socrates, philosophizing tranquilly among his friends, is the gentlest that one could desire; that of Jesus, expiring amid tortures, injured, reviled, accursed by a whole people, is the most horrible that one could fear. Socrates, taking the poisoned cup, blesses him who presents it and who laments him; Jesus, in the midst of a frightful punishment, prays for his infuriated executioners. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we say that the gospel history is a fiction? (*inventée à plaisir*). My friend, it is not thus that fiction works; and the deeds of Socrates, which no one doubts, are less attested than those of Jesus Christ. At bottom, this is only to push back, without removing, the difficulty. It would be more inconceivable that several men had, in harmony with each other, fabricated this book than that one should have furnished the subject of it. Never would Jewish authors have either caught this tone or alighted on this morality; and the gospel has marks of truth so great, so striking, so perfectly inimitable, that the inventor of it would be more astonishing than the hero."* So much was Voltaire mortified by this passage that he publicly complained, in one of his writings, of the expression that Jesus had "died like a God." He speaks of its author as a writer of "extravagant ideas and contradictory paradoxes." "Has he seen gods die?" he asks. "Do they die? I do not believe that the author of so much trash has ever written anything so absurd."† But Rousseau could not be thus put down, any more than the confession that

* This remarkable passage—the most remarkable in Rousseau's writings—is rarely quoted in its fulness. It is in the "Émile," book iv., and is part of the Savoy vicar's "Profession de Foi" (vol. iv., pp. 115–117).

† This extract is from the treatise of Voltaire already quoted, "Dieu et les Hommes," chap. xxxv. ("Œuvres de Voltaire," Geneva edition, vol. xx., p. 110).

Jesus was the "Son of God" coming involuntarily from lips constrained by his presence could be repressed by murmurs of others that resented the exclamation.

With this we might leave Rousseau, breathing the wish (alas! ineffectual) that his life, his writings, and his lasting influence had been in the line of such a testimony. But there is a further light cast on what seems favorable to Christianity in this memorable profession, and what adverse, here or elsewhere, by the controversy which it called forth. Rousseau's "Émile" had been condemned by the Parliament of Paris, and also by the theologians of Geneva, and he therefore wrote, to clear his position, his letter to M. Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, and also his "Lettres de la Montagne." In the former of these works he distinctly recognizes the immediate witness of the Spirit in dealing with the gospel narrative, and the superiority of this to all literary controversy; and in the latter he explains that his difficulties in regard to the transmission of the Scripture, as stated by the Savoy vicar, were urged more in the character of a Romish priest than in his own. In both these writings he earnestly claims to be regarded as a Christian, and warmly complains of the injustice done him in denying him this title. At the same time, he enters fully in the second work—his "Lettres de la Montagne"—into the question of miracles, not disputing their possibility, but rather their utility; and he leaves the fact of their occurrence undecided, while greatly exalting in comparison the internal evidence of Christianity, which again he finds in the moral greatness and absolutely perfect morality of Jesus, apart from doubtful dogmatic speculations.* The only offensive part of the Savoy vicar's profession which he does not recall or explain is the objection to revelation on the ground of its want of universality. Though no one could have divined that this important supplement represented the author's point of view as set forth in his "Émile," it is obvious that, however far the entire explanation, even at the best, is from ranking him with the orthodox, it at least

* The passage in which Rousseau affirms the absolute completeness of the gospel morality is in "Lettres de la Montagne," Partie i., Lettre iii. "The precepts of Plato are often very sublime; but how greatly does he not sometimes err, and how far do his errors reach! As for Cicero, can we believe that without Plato this orator would have attained to his 'Offices?' The gospel alone is, as to morality, always sure, always true, always unique, and always like itself" (Œuvres, vol. x., p. 249, note).

separates him by a wide interval from the rest of the Encyclopedists; and in regard to the position and claims of Jesus and his transcendent greatness, places him far above even Renan and others of that modern school, who have been supposed most entirely to have disowned the rude and remorseless unbelief of last century. It is perhaps not going too far to say that, in a large view, Rousseau (so far as his ultimate creed goes) is a Christian of the school of Channing rather than an Encyclopedist.*

III. Only a few words need to be added in regard to the *third* or last form of unbelief in this period of French history, the Atheistical. This seems in every case to have been connected with materialism and with fatalism, which have always been the twin sisters of atheism, if not its parents or its children. This is visibly so in the case of La Mettrie, the very title of whose book, "L'Homme Machine," prepares us for its negative inference as to the being of God. In the case of Helvetius, who may claim a word of notice, though he entitles his work "De l'Esprit," or "Mind," yet the whole drift of it is to make mind exclusively the development of matter, and to treat all theology as delusion and superstition. As a work of morals, which it mainly is, nothing can be more gross than its selfishness, though it pretends, in a certain way, to seek the public good. This, however, is no better than the contentment of universal selfishness; and its strain of virtue is so low that it even appeals to government to promote luxury, and, through luxury, public good, by abolishing all those laws that cherish a false modesty and restrain libertinage. When Helvetius has dismissed God, government is, according to his scheme, the all-creating power that is to take his place, and make the world new. What an idea must a *philosophe* have had of human nature who could write sentences like these: "The art of the legislator consists in forcing men, by the sentiment of self-love, to be always just to each other." "The legislator is to discover the means of necessitating men to probity, by forcing the passions to bear no other fruits than those of virtue and wisdom."† This virtue, however, cannot have any respect to the

* See Appendix, Note G.

† Helvetius, "De l'Esprit," p. 238. The first edition of Helvetius came out in 1758. The work of La Mettrie had appeared in 1748.

welfare of humanity. That is too wide and Platonic (respect for convention does not allow Helvetius to say too *Christian*) a sentiment. The utmost practical reach of man's motives in action is his country; it is only genius that has to do with all mankind. Thus atheism disowns even humanity; and in Helvetius the spring is too low to send its waters far abroad.

Another writer whom, unhappily, we must rank with the atheistic party is Diderot, the joint editor with D'Alembert, in its first period, of the "Encyclopédie," and for its last six years (1759–1765) its sole editor. Whether D'Alembert shared this deeper unbelief with Diderot, as he did to the full his antichristian zeal with Voltaire, is not certain; but the evidence hardly seems to point to more than something resembling Voltaire's later indecision and incoherence. As for Diderot, there is no doubt whatever; and one sees with the deepest sorrow, so strong and vigorous a mind, and one so full and encyclopedic, not only dead, but even hostile, to the highest and most ennobling of all convictions. The moral irregularity of his life —however passionately, by some in our day, the connection between the moral state and the opinions be denied—may have so far tended to this issue; but when we remember in what a direful element of evil not only professed Theists, but professed Christians, then lived, we may ascribe it rather to a certain consistency of thought and fearlessness of consequences that Diderot pursued materialism to its last and deepest landing-place. Yet this solution is also difficult, as Diderot is confessed to have shrunk from disclosure, at least in the "Encyclopédie," and to have written for it articles on religion that were accommodated to more orthodox conclusions. However, there is not the least doubt as to the fact of his entirely denying and opposing theistic views, where he thought himself more free; and, in particular, he is the reviver in more recent times of the argument, as old as Lucretius, that the order of the universe may be accounted for by the innumerable chances arising out of the manifold motions of its parts from all eternity having led at length to the present combination, which has proved permanent. This, however, is a mere assertion, which cannot be carried out in thought by separating the alleged elements of the universe, and then following their motions. It assumes the eternity of motion as essential to matter; and it overlooks the innumerable cases where the disposition of matter seems the result of will, and not of law. To suppose a universe made

without mind is as reasonable as to suppose an "Encyclopédie" without an editor; and it might have occurred to Diderot, as it did to Cicero, that those works of nature which required the minds of so many *savans* then and since to explore them could not have existed without some greater mind at the bottom: "Quis enim hunc hominem dixerit, . . . qui ea casu fieri dicat, quæ, quanto consilio gerantur, nullo consilio assequi possumus?" *

The only other member of the atheistic group whom we shall mention is the one who has been most influential, though not under his own name. This is Baron D'Holbach, familiar to all readers of the works of Voltaire, Rousseau, and others of that circle, but still more intimate with Diderot and the section of the Encyclopedists that went on to atheism. Any member of the original company could say of him, "Gaius mine host, and of the whole Ecclesia;" though Rousseau breaks away about 1757, as he says, from the whole "D'Holbachians." D'Holbach and Grimm are the two Germans associated with this coterie, though they are Germans as much Gallicized in literary taste as Frederick the Great. It was at D'Holbach's table that David Hume, professing that he had never met an atheist, was told that for the first time he was in the company of seventeen.† The work of D'Holbach, which preserves his memory more than any memoirs or literary correspondence, is his systematic exposition of atheism, which appeared in 1770, under the title "Système de la Nature," and with the assumed name of Mirabaud, who had died ten years before, secretary to the Academy. Of this work it is not necessary to give any special outline or criticism. It is the usual antitheistic panorama—matter, motion, sensationalism, necessity, extinction of the world hereafter, and sudden appearance of a new world here, born of enlightened education and legislation, without priests or tyrants. The force of such a work lies in the ecclesiastical and political rottenness of the times. Faith in God was not easy when Louis XV. was his vicegerent, and a hierarchy pandering to court vice and corruption his oracles; and as D'Holbach had sanguine confidence, like all the rest, in his own scheme, it is not wonderful that many were impressed even by his cold negations. "There is," says Hume, then in

* "De Natura Deorum," ii. 38.
† Burton's "Life of Hume," ii., p. 220.

Paris, "a book published in Holland in two volumes, octavo, called 'De la Nature.' It is prolix, and in many parts whimsical; but contains some of the boldest reasonings to be found in print." *

While all this incessant, various, impetuous attack on Christianity and Theism by the highest literary and social powers was going on in France, we look in vain for any such reply by the existing Church as came, and so effectually, in England. Never did any great corporate body exhibit such a *testimonium paupertatis* as the Romish hierarchy at this crisis. I hardly know any book that has preserved any shadow of reputation, but the Abbé Guénée's "Letters of Certain Jews" to Voltaire; † and from the Protestant Church of that day I do not know of any reply at all. Christianity, as it then was, could not be defended. It would have been a miracle of the wrong kind, had any addition been made to apologetics that would have sheltered the oppressive superstition of the one Church and the meagre rationalism of the other from the blasts of judgment.

It may be questioned, however, whether the teachings of the Encyclopedists, in their vast work and out of it, would have been wide and lasting enough to have produced, at least speedily, a great national revolution, but for another cause. The help lent to the American people in their War of Independence at once exhausted the finances of the French nation and created a sympathy with liberty in a practical form; and these influences together forced on a crisis which could not but shatter the whole existing fabric in Church and State. How differently the great American nation emerged from their trial! They, too, had their unbelief, fostered and spread by French co-operation and sympathy, and growing also for years out of those Pelagian and rationalizing tendencies which had saddened the last days of Jonathan Edwards. But in the terrible struggle, the rising nation, in its deepest heart, fell back upon God; the spirit of the Puritans prevailed over the spirit of the doubters and indifferentists; and when peace came, a mighty Christian Church in embryo stood ready to be baptized with the breath of fresh revival, and to spread itself with a growth equal to that of the new-born commonwealth, amid the rising cities

* Burton's "Life of Hume," ii., p. 196.

† The "Lettres de quelques Juifs" was one of the few works on the evidences of the Bible, written against him, which Voltaire condescended to notice.

and over the vast solitudes of a continent. Alas for France that no such preserving salt was found in her, no possibility of such an alliance between Christianity and Democracy, as would have met the wants of the new time, and averted the long horrors and agonies of a periodic revolution that doomed France herself as the worst sufferer to endless civil strife and foreign war, and inflicted upon the European equilibrium a shock which, after well-nigh a century, it has hardly recovered! The evil inheritance of St. Bartholomew and the Revocation had to be accepted; and it was seen how much more deep was the lesson of blood and proscription than of tolerance which philosophy had preached—a tolerance blended with contempt and scorn, and preached in accents of bitterness rather than of love. It was seen how strangely untrue was the prediction of Voltaire, that when dogmas were removed—the dogmas of religion—morality would be found easy and harmonious; for new dogmas arose—those of morality, social and political—and the worst deeds were done under the formulas of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The loose teaching in regard to marriage, and looser practice, bore fruit in relentless cruelty; and the alliance which was remarked by Dugald Stewart and Sir James Mackintosh, as it had been before set forth by Milton, was blazoned in letters of fire, "Lust hard by Hate." The defence of suicide also made life cheap, not only in the case of those who so numerously acted on it, but of society at large. Rousseau had written the awful sentence in regard to atheism, "Its principles do not kill men, but they hinder them from being born, in destroying the manners which multiply them, in detaching them from their species, in reducing all their affections to a secret egoism, as fatal to population as to virtue."* Now it was seen how greatly he had understated the truth, and how surely atheism, and not less the bare theism that detaches God from human sympathies, is fraught with violence; for it was under the banner of one or other that in the four hundred and twenty days of Terror, the guillotine destroyed four thousand victims. Voltaire and his associates would doubtless have disclaimed these atrocities; but what did their principles do to hinder them? These things were done in the name of Reason,—first, when, in November, 1793, the so-called Goddess of Reason was installed in Notre-Dame; and again, when, in June, 1794, the

* "Émile," book iv., "Œuvres de Rousseau," vol. ix., p. 128.

feast of the Supreme Being was presided over by Robespierre in the Garden of the Tuileries. The boundless scorn and disgust with which absurd rites like these, celebrated in the midst of ruffianism and slaughter, are handled by Carlyle might even so far represent the better feelings of the Encyclopedists, who desired no such caricature of their system. But how powerless had their system been to prevent such horrors, even should we absolve it from all tendency to produce them! Nor can we fail to see in these very excesses a demand for a visible and embodied religion, such as the philosophers were wholly unable to supply. The last thing that they would have expected was a new ritual of the God of Nature decreed amid barbarities. They looked rather to a mild decay of Christianity under the autumn sun of Reason, till, without plucking off the leaves of its old worship, they might see these cover only the philosophic fruits. "We have never pretended," says Voltaire to D'Alembert, "to enlighten the cobblers and the maid-servants; we leave that to the apostles."* But now had come a universal dispensation of reason, not only to fill, but to shake, the whole house, and leave nothing standing that did not own reason for its source. The Pentecost of unbelief had come; and what were its creations? The failure is decisive in the history of the world; for there never can be a better moment to inaugurate a new creed, a new ritual, even a new and revolutionary calendar; and if these were all dead-born, or born to die, does not Deism as a final world worship resign the field? A still deeper cause for this miscarriage was indicated when, after the Reign of Terror, the first man of the Directory, La Réveillère-Lepaux, attempted in 1797 to establish the higher Deism, called *Théophilanthropie*. He had read a paper on the subject before the Institute, and asked the opinion of Talleyrand upon it. "I have but one observation to make," said the critic. "In order to found his religion, Jesus Christ was crucified and raised again; you ought to attempt as much."† This was the incurable weakness. Theophilanthropists, Deists, Atheists, as they did not believe in miracles, so they did not believe in martyrdom. They could die for liberty, but not for religion. That was still left to Christians. When it came to the cross, they

* "Correspondance," 2d September, vol. xliii., p. 294.

† The anecdote is told by Guizot, in his "Meditations sur l'État Actuel de la Religion Chrétienne." Paris, 1866, pp. 1, 2.

were ready to exclaim, as Voltaire of the crucifix, "Take away that gibbet!"

After these thirteen years of storm and tempest, "blood and fire and vapor of smoke," all illustrating the new age of reason, nothing remains but a military dictatorship; the old "Louis Quatorze" days returned, with as strong a reading of the words *L'état c'est moi!*—victories consoling for liberties; and the Revolution with the "Encyclopédie" brought under the triple crown, only depressed so far as not to overtop the soldier's helmet. Could the heroes of emancipation have welcomed this, unless, like Voltaire, at the last extremity, they were prepared to lie down on the bosom of the Church, and ask pardon for having scandalized her? But there is evidence that much popular feeling welcomed the return; and the "Génie du Christianisme" of Châteaubriand, which came with the year of the Concordat (1802), gave it eloquent expression. Let us acknowledge the power of this book, which, with the force of original genius, brought new arms into the field, enlarging the arguments for theism by the scenes and wonders of the Western world—savannas, forests, starry solitudes—where the sense of God overpowers the soul; following the track of Christianity through ages as the mother of arts, of laws, and of civilization; and showing how its doctrines and hopes meet and nourish the deepest wants and longings of the heart. Yet, while re-allying genius to faith, and turning the flank of unbelief at an unexpected point, we cannot pronounce this a satisfactory apologetic for Christianity. It is too mediæval and sacerdotal. Its romanticism runs into a glorification of what cannot be excused, and a defence of what cannot be retained. Its helps from the New World are too traditional and fanciful, for the Jesuit labors among the Indians have hardly stood the test of time; and it has missed the best lesson of all, and the most hopeful for France and mankind, the spectacle of a Christian people free and yet loyal, with the Bible for the bond of the family and the strength of the State—breaking up the wilderness, yet retaining the records of all progress, and dwelling in tents with the fathers of the world.

Thus we have in this revived spirit of belief, always running into sad reaction, and in the persistent spirit of unbelief, which all the failures and abortions of the Revolution and successive eras have not tamed and beaten down, the two forces, delivered over into this century, whose life-and-death wrestle with each

other has marked the history of France through all its fourscore years. Do we see any prospect of decisive victory or conciliation? I dare not say it; nor, terrible and humbling as their struggle is, with its action on the whole religious, political, and social life of the world, do I desire its cessation, save in one way. A France victoriously unbelieving; a France victoriously Romanist; who dares face either alternative? Must the extremes not almost by this time despair of success? Is not their meeting-point prepared in that evangelical Protestantism which, alas! they alike despise? Here the Romanist would find reason without giving up faith, and the Encyclopedist faith without giving up reason. Here the Romanist would satisfy his love of authority in a living tradition, and the Encyclopedist his love of criticism in an ever-fresh inquiry. Here the Romanist would find a corporate body that met his sense of unity, and the Encyclopedist an individual development that met his craving for variety. The divine principle which the one exalts would not absorb the human which the other cherishes, and the eternity of truth would be reconciled with the march of freedom. Is this a vision or a prophecy? And ought not the Protestant Church to open its heart and its gates as wide as the Gospel itself will sanction, to receive guests from such opposite quarters to its sanctuary of peace? Then the nation of Europe that wants oneness most would have it most fully, and the schism of the sixteenth century would be the healing of our own.

Let us not forget our obligations as a nation to God in connection with the rise and prevalence of unbelief in France, and the revolutionary movement to which it tended. We no doubt suffered much through the contagion of evil principles, and the troubles and wars in which, not without our own fault, we were involved. Yet the measure of truth, of a political kind, however mixed up with errors, quickened our national life, and arrested a tendency to reaction and tyranny; and we have reason to be thankful if we were able to choose the good and refuse the evil. Above all, in the wild tumult of unbelief and license which marked the later passages of the Revolution, a counteractive was found to kindred propensities in our own country; and what the controversy with Deism had failed to do was now accomplished. A sensible change took place in the current of public opinion, and the revival which Methodism had so auspiciously begun was helped forward in many di-

rections. In reply to the defiant blasts of ungodliness and atheism, proclaiming their reign as from the summit of the world, our great missionary societies were instituted, and sent forth their messengers to its extremities. An electric impulse shot through the English-speaking Church in every land, and soon extended to other Protestants. Faith wrought by love in the abolition of the slave-trade, in prison philanthropy, and in similar movements. As if the shock had awakened the deepest genius of our nation, our very literature started on a new career, with the Bible at its head, of which our greatest writers were not ashamed. The pulpit rose to a new elevation, and Christianity recovered its social influence in the home, the school, and the commerce of life. Our giant wars did not stay the movement; and though peace brought its troubles, Christian plans and labors went still forward. Thus did God make "a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder," and the volcanic fires in France guided us back into the way of peace. Nor did the revival fail to revisit the land whence in such guise it had come, and what reached us as a menace and a danger returned as a safeguard and a blessing. Thus may the sufferings of nations be redeemed; and that which is paid at the longest date may bear the largest interest.

LECTURE V.

UNBELIEF IN GERMANY.—RATIONALISM.

Differences of Rationalism from English and French Unbelief.—Popular Philosophy. — Bahrdt; Critical School. — Decay of Orthodoxy.—Semler.—Eichhorn.—Canon of the old Testament.—Origin of the Gospels.—Meagre Doctrinal Creed.—Paulus.—Naturalist Theory.—Reimarus.—"Wolfenbüttel Fragments."—Plan of Jesus and his Disciples.—Lessing: his Religion a Problem.—Concealment of the Fragmentist.—His Critical Position.—"Education of the Human Race."—"Anti-Goetze."—"Nathan the Wise."—Alleged Pantheism; Ethical School. — Kant: Defects of his "Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft."—Recovery of Germany from Rationalism.

THOUGH the history of unbelief in Germany during last century is connected with the histories of unbelief in England and in France, it is as unlike them in some important respects as they are unlike each other. There cannot be a doubt as to the connection of German unbelief with its two earlier forms. Lechler, in his "History of English Deism," has given a long list of the Deistical works that were translated into German, with the English replies to them, before 1760. As Voltaire was a link of connection with England, so he was with Germany, through his friendship with Frederick the Great, and his residence at his court from 1750 to 1753. The issue of this, indeed, was anything but brilliant for Voltaire, but the declared freethinking of Frederick cannot but have acted adversely on the faith of his people; and, accordingly, Lechler gives the testimony of an eye-witness, who, in the Seven Years' War, had seen highly-placed officers in the Prussian camp diligently reading Collins and Tindal.* There were other features of resemblance which have been noticed. As there had been a re-

* This eye-witness was Thorschmid, editor of the German "Freidenker Bibliothek," which contained translations and refutations of the English Freethinkers, and came out from 1765 to 1767.—LECHLER, p. 451.

action in England against Puritanism, so there was a reaction in Germany against the Pietism of Spener and Francke; and as there had been a philosophy which had been used, though unfairly, to help on freethinking—that of Locke in England, and afterwards, with less misapplication, that of Condillac in France—so the philosophy of Wolff, though not by any materialistic bearing, yet by its tendency to exalt the power of reason, and also by the stress it laid on natural religion, had helped to beget rationalism in Germany. All this may have in it some truth; but I am struck with the unlikeness of the German to the English and French movements—though certainly they are of the same family—rather than with the likeness. In the *first* place, the German movement does not rise out of grievances. It must have arisen out of the want of faith; but this had not associated with it any sense of restraint or oppression. In England, the existence of a body of privileged ecclesiastics was assailed as an exception to general freedom; and in France, the name of the Church was the synonym of all social tyranny and injustice. But in Germany no complaint of this kind was heard among the abettors of rationalism; and they sought no redress of a political nature, with the threatened alternative of revolution. *Secondly*, the controversy was not conducted by men outside the Christian body protesting vehemently against its corruptions, and pleading for its dissolution as a religious institute, or its radical transformation. There was nothing of the character of an invasion or onset upon a book, or system, or entire order of men; at least this was not at all the prevailing character, as in England and France. The changes were made by men still professing to retain the Bible, and to treat it with great respect; who belonged as much to the Church and to Christianity, according to their own representations, as before; and who, with very few exceptions, were of that clerical order which in England, and not less in France, was the mark of endless denunciations and sarcasms, as the home of priestcraft and spiritual jugglery and tyranny. Hence a *third* difference between the German movement and the foregoing ones, viz., that the results were far more of the nature of a compromise. In England the Deistical modifications were wholly rejected, and the Christian Church emerged stronger in faith at every point. In France the creed of both Romanist and Protestant remained unaffected, and the chief visible result was a political

convulsion. In Germany, on the other hand, while the form of Christianity was retained, and its general historical basis and institutions adhered to, the movement mainly issued in lowering the tone of faith in wide circles within the Church, and in leading to the denial of those articles which seemed contrary to reason. Hence this result has been called *Naturalism* or *Rationalism* rather than *Deism;* for so much of Christianity was conserved that the clergy and others who went through the change never thought of rejecting the name of Christ; and they even found it convenient to retain the old confessions and hymn-books (with some dilution of the latter), though all the while the position of most of them agreed better with the views of the English Deists than with those of the Augsburg Confession or Heidelberg Catechism. German Rationalism was in this respect a phenomenon similar to the Unitarianism of the New England States, as that grew by an internal process of decay out of the Puritanism of the seventeenth century; or like the Broad Churchism of more recent times, which denies or abates the supernatural, and yet professes, even to its extreme verge, a faith of some kind or other in Christianity.

These are the principal differences, but other subordinate ones may be noticed. The German movement towards unbelief is much more learned than either the English or French. It was conducted by theologians fully trained, and not, as in England, by men who had broken down, or were amateurs; or, as in France, by great, but in this department unskilled, popular writers. Hence, while there has been much haste and prejudice, there has not been, or not often, the same lamentable ignorance; and there is also, on the whole, a more reverent spirit, and comparatively little of that impurity by which French literature, even in its highest representatives, is here disgraced. Naturally, too, as the Deist without makes the worst case he can against the Bible, the Rationalist within says the most he can in its favor. It is also to be noticed that Atheism and Pantheism do not appear on the roll of eighteenth-century unbelief in Germany. It is only with the doubtful exception of Lessing that Pantheism asserts itself ere the century has run out; nor has Atheism become a professed creed till our own days. How this is to be accounted for does not belong to this inquiry. It was natural for Rationalism first to take the field, and try its strength. When this failed, other and more des-

perate counsels obtained a hearing. We are, therefore, here concerned with Rationalism, or with the Deism that underlies it, or falls below it, and with this alone.

It is not easy to make any classification of the Rationalism of Germany as it developed itself from about the year 1750 to the close of the century within which our vision is confined. Many names, of course, must be omitted, and only types can be selected. This being understood, perhaps we may reduce the various and sometimes complicated phenomena to three heads —viz., *first*, Popular Rationalism, sometimes called popular philosophy; *secondly*, Critical Rationalism; and, *thirdly*, Ethical Rationalism. Under the *first* class, fall men like Dr. Carl F. Bahrdt; under the *second*, names like Semler, Eichhorn, and Paulus, to whom we may add Lessing, and, as a cross between the two, and as associated with Lessing, Reimarus, the Wolfenbüttel Fragmentist; while under the *third* stand Kant and those of his school. It is but a rough division, but it may serve to give some order to our discussions; and it follows generally the track of development.

I. Of the men of the popular philosophy—a school of which Dr. Carl F. Bahrdt is the latest and most notorious product—it is not necessary to say much. They claimed to take the place of Wolff and his disciples, eliminating the more abstruse and speculative element derived from Leibnitz, and also the higher Christian element, which Wolff had retained. Their tendency in philosophy is to empiricism; in ethics, to utilitarianism; and in religion, to Deism. Their head-quarters was Berlin, where, in 1765, the bookseller Nicolai established his magazine, supported by the theologian Eberhardt, the author of the "New Apology for Socrates," by Moses Mendelssohn, the Jewish representative of Illumination, and by others. This school came nearest the French in its so-called *Aufklärung*, its exaltation of culture, and its sanguine confidence in man's perfectibility by education, and by a rational regard to his own happiness. Of this spirit Bahrdt is to be taken as the exaggeration. Born, in 1741, in Saxony, he had been pastor and professor in Leipzig till his irregularity of life drove him away; after which, wandering from place to place, he found for ten years a refuge in Halle, where he at once delivered lectures and kept a coffee-house; till, after other adventures in Prussia, including an imprisonment, he died, in 1792. His work, which bears the lofty

title, "System of Moral Religion for the Final Tranquillizing of Doubters and Thinkers, to be Read by all Christians and non-Christians," was published in 1787, at Berlin, with a dedication (to the King of Prussia) as grandiose as its title. But this book, which doubtless contains the substance of its author's lectures at Halle and elsewhere, is really more rational than his career and style might have led one to anticipate. It is a system of Utilitarianism, or Search after Happiness. But it makes happiness depend on God, and it argues well for his existence in the usual way, and also for the immortality of the soul, and a moral life in preparation for the future. Where it totally fails is in reducing sin to a minimum, curable by suffering and by repentance, and in excluding the whole Bible doctrine of redemption. Duty sinks also low, and prayer is merely subjective in its effects. Christ is only the greatest of teachers and martyrs; though Bahrdt departs from the French unbelievers in asserting so much as this, and in closing his account of him with an apostrophe which so far agrees with that of Rousseau: "O thou great, godlike soul! no mortal can name thy name without bending the knee, and in reverence and admiration feeling thy unapproachable greatness! Where is the people among whom a man of this stamp has ever been born? How I envy you, ye descendants of Israel! Alas that you do not feel the pride which we who call ourselves Christians feel, on account of one so incomparable being sprung of your race! . . . That soul is most depraved that knows Jesus, and does not love him."* It is something to hear as much as this even from the mouth of an erratic German rationalist; and to the credit of Germany it must be said that even its rationalism—as distinct from scepticism—has not often sunk below this strain.

II. The *critical* school had a far greater influence in forming the German nation to rationalism than the popular philosophy, or the general spirit of literature. It was in the German Universities, where the future occupants of the pulpit were trained, that the deepest fountain-head of rationalism was to be sought. At the Reformation a mighty influence went forth from the Universities; and this has continued down to our own times, though it is now limited by the creation of a new force in an independent career in political life. At the time when the

* "Moralische Religion," vol. i. p. 71.

rationalistic movement, fed by different sources, was in its commencement, it was unfortunate for the future welfare of the Protestant Church that the ablest scholars, and men most fitted in other respects to form the national mind, were, if not alienated from positive Christianity, not warmly, much less enthusiastically, devoted to it. There were great scholars, but nowhere a great Christian leader, among the theological professors; and ere long the scholars who were in the front rank either became silent or avowedly hostile. A great scholar like Bengel at this crisis, a great character like Spener, with even less of scholarship, restored to life, especially if assisted by master-spirits among the younger men, might have retrieved the battle. But, as it was, the weight of older scholarship was void of earnestness, and that of the rising genius and learning, inclined, by false principles, critical or philosophical, the wrong way, so that a career was entered upon which could not stop till it reached the bottom. It would be wrong to say of such elder scholars as Baumgarten in Halle, Ernesti in Leipzig, or John David Michaelis in Göttingen, that they were rationalists. They resembled very much the theologians of the Church of England who repelled Deism; and in the same place would probably have acted the same part. But they had lost somewhat of faith in the Bible as a supernatural product; and it had become to them more a great and transcendent classic than a living revelation. They were so familiar with the historico-grammatical interpretation of it, justly urged by Ernesti within its own limits, that they tended to forget that there was more than history and grammar in the case, and that a higher kingdom was entered by this gate-way. In a younger mind, not without its serious feeling and sympathy, but still more blind to the Divine side of the Bible, and more keenly alive to the human, relying still more upon philology and history, and more averse to any recognition of spiritual help, such as had been contended for by the school of Spener, this tendency became decisive, and in the career of Semler marks an epoch. This theologian, brought up in Halle amid pious influences, gradually goes over to what may be called the theology of the letter, and from the commencement of his professorship in this University, in 1752, becomes, as he would have said himself, more and more free from traditional influences. It is impossible to notice or even simply to mention his various works; but one of them, his treatise on the "Furnishing of a Theolo-

gian,"* casts much light, not only on his own position, but that of others in the German Church, when it was published in 1765–66. There is an extreme over-valuing of philological apparatus, and of wide-extended church-historical details, especially drawn from the first Christian centuries, such as the author pours out from his boundless memory. The Bible seems to float amidst this mass of critical and historical matter, and to be almost submerged by it. The principle is pushed greatly too far, of judging every part of Scripture by its own context, so that the Old Testament becomes little better than a book for the Jews; and the underlying unity of the New Testament also suffers. Classic usage is made to dominate Scripture teaching; and thus the Bible is reduced to the level of nature. In harmony with this tendency, all through the innumerable Church history references, the liberality of culture seems to consist in being receptive of every fashion of doctrine regarding the Trinity, or Grace, with a leaning, however, rather to Arius than to Athanasius, and to Pelagius than to Augustine. Yet Semler has also his connections with orthodoxy. He speaks affectionately of Luther, Melancthon, and Camerarius, as his masters. When he brings in the Socinians, and acknowledges their merits in interpretation, it is not, as an English Deist would infallibly have done, to make a side-stroke at their opponents, for he faithfully criticises Socinus's book "De Servatore," and charges it with one-sidedness and prejudice, and he calls attention to the disagreements in interpretation among the Socinians themselves.† We thus see how Semler had not worked out his own scheme to its consequences; and the same thing appears in his treatment of Dr. Bahrdt, when the latter attempted to enter the University of Halle as a divinity professor; for it was by Semler's influence with the Faculty, in a great measure, that this proposal was defeated, and the example was thus given that rationalism did not regard toleration as unlimited.

The work of Semler was carried forward by others, but by none of so much learning and ability as Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752–1827), who, from 1774 professor in Jena, and then from 1788 in Göttingen, marks in the latter place the lowest point of depression between Michaelis and Ewald. And yet

* "Institutio Brevior ad Liberalem Eruditionem Theologicam."
† Semler's "Brevior Institutio," ii. § 26.

Eichhorn was by no means a vulgar rationalist, but one filled with the highest admiration of the literary qualities of the Old Testament, and resolute in defending it as a religious document unrivalled in its time as a vehicle of truth and goodness. Unhappily, in Eichhorn the idea of inspiration is entirely wanting. Of the supernatural in Old Testament history there is the faintest lingering trace. Miracles have no existence, and are exaggerations of natural phenomena; as, for example, the falling of the walls of Jericho represents the effect of a sudden assault, along with a shout, when the marching round six times had put the garrison off their guard;* and the escape of Jonah is possibly the result of his alighting on the back of a sea-monster that carried him to the shore.† Eichhorn, however, holds as much as can be reconciled with a merely natural theory of the origin of religion. Moses having attained (he does not explain how) to the conviction of the divine unity, becomes the missionary of that idea, and the leader of the nation that had grown in Egypt. The divine communications that have not reality for us, or reality only as natural discoveries of truth, had a higher reality for them. They acquired Canaan by natural means, but yet their conquest, like every advance in civilization, was justified by history, and, in that sense, divine. Prophecy, in the supernatural sense, did not exist among them; but, according to the general law of religions, they had their oracles, purer and nobler than those of any classical people. The prophets were their moral reformers, strong in the moral ideas of retribution as applicable to nations, and hence divining the history of other peoples and their own with something like preternatural sagacity, and continually enlarging their religious horizon till they look forward to something like a golden age, in which, in connection with a descendant of their kings, the evils of the present are to be redressed, and a better age ushered in. In all this, as will be seen, there is no doctrine of redemption in the orthodox sense, and Eichhorn entirely misses the character of the Jewish dispensation as a preparatory, a typical, and a developing economy, designed to awake the sense of sin, and to satisfy it by salvation. In this respect he falls

* Eichhorn, "Einleitung in das Alte Testament," vol. iii. p. 402, fourth edition. Göttingen, 1823.

† Eichhorn allows here a subsequent legendary dressing of the naked fact.—Vol. iv. p. 349.

far even below Ewald, who, however vague his doctrine of the supernatural and of redemption, has penetrated to the idea of the Mosaic economy as one of grace, and to the view of the Messiah as a perfect Being and a divinely-sent Deliverer.

While Eichhorn is thus low and even dreary as to the central parts of his scheme, it is wonderful how often he stops short in his criticism of those results which some who have followed him have pronounced imperative. He contests the later chapters, and indeed some others, of Isaiah,* and places the last shape of Daniel in the Maccabean period, though he allows an earlier authorship for the first six chapters, and, curiously enough, ascribes the last not to any patriotic zeal against Antiochus, but to mere (though innocent) fiction, or history assuming the form of prophecy.† But he stoutly contends for the historic character of the Pentateuch, while prosecuting large researches into Elohistic and Jehovistic parts of Genesis; and he maintains that the last four books contain nothing, roundly speaking, that may not have been written by Moses, or some of those about him, and under his eye; while the whole Pentateuch, with some less important later insertions, was finally combined out of these earlier materials after the conquest of Canaan and before Samuel.‡ So also he does not allow nearly so much as De Wette and others contend for of difference between the Books of Samuel and Kings, on the one hand, and of Chronicles on the other.§ He is willing to grant a multitude more of Psalms to David than is admitted by Ewald; and even the Book of Job, due to some extra-Israelite source, or some Israelite in Idumean regions, he prefers, in spite of every difficulty, to carry up to an age before Moses, so as to account for its non-Mosaic color, and want of allusion to his history.‖ There is thus an honesty in Eichhorn which one must respect; and as his critical work ran through forty-four years (1780–1824), it met a returning spirit of faith; and it still hangs

* "Einleitung," vol. iv. pp. 82–90. † Ibid., iv. pp. 508–512.

‡ The whole discussion of Eichhorn on the Pentateuch, in his third volume, is much liker that of Hengstenberg or Hävernick than of Ewald. His summing up is found in vol. iii. pp. 322–368.

§ See his protest against the depression of Chronicles, in order to favor the late entrance of the Levitical system.—*Einleitung*, vol. iii. p. 604.

‖ "The oldest poetical work of antiquity is the Book of Job, a Theodicee which has been admired for four thousand years, and will be to the end of time."—Ibid., vol. v. p. 114.

with a kind of moonlike clearness and roundness of outline in a warmer sky.

His results in the field of New Testament criticism are also of interest, though probably more destructive. He is the author of the famous document hypothesis in regard to the origin and mutual relations of the Synoptical Gospels, tracing them up to an Aramaic original in its successive formations and combinations. Two shapes of this original, one with additions such as now appear in Matthew, and another with additions such as now appear in Luke, are run together by a process of selection and fresh construction by Mark into his canonical Gospel; another, or third, shape of the original, embracing additional matter peculiar to Luke, is run together with the first document used by Mark to form our present canonical Matthew; and, with the second document used by Mark, is run together by Luke to form our present canonical Luke. The common original supplies the matter in which the three Evangelists agree; its modifications towards Matthew and towards Luke supply the parts where two Evangelists out of three agree by following the modified originals, as supposed; while the wonderful verbal harmonies in the present Greek are explained by a pre-existing Greek translation of the first and third documents, so that here there is accordance; while the second also, as used by Mark and Luke, had to be translated by them independently for the first time, so that the result there disagrees.* Such is the complicated scheme, devised to meet, as all admit, complicated facts, which the wonderful ingenuity of Eichhorn has worked out; nor is there anything at all rationalistic in the conception of such a theory. Some such hypothesis, or something equivalent, must be brought in to account for the astonishing compound of harmony and difference which the Synoptical Gospels present; and hence the other hypotheses before or after the days of Eichhorn, such as the copying hypothesis, the fragment hypothesis, and the oral Gospel hypothesis, with modifications of Eichhorn's one, as by Weiss in our own times, do not argue anything for the orthodoxy or heterodoxy of their authors. But Eichhorn uses his theory rationalistically, turning the so-called discovery of the original Gospel into an argu-

* The document hypothesis occupies nearly the first half of the first volume (pp. 161–454) of the "Einleitung in das Neue Testament." The summing up is in pp. 372–375.

ment against the historical reality of the miraculous conception and other facts, which that Gospel is alleged to want, and even denying to the Apostle Matthew sufficient authority for whatever is not found in the other Gospels; so that the death of Judas and the casting of lots would fall out, and even the watch at the sepulchre, on which Woolston built his denial of the resurrection, would be itself denied.* The disentanglement of the *Ur-Evangelium*, it will thus be seen, is sufficiently difficult, and indeed has not been generally accepted as final; but the prejudice against this method is immensely increased by the wholly arbitrary way in which the remaining portions—connected with the names of Matthew or either of the other Synoptists—are accepted or denied, as suits the author.

With regard to the writings of John, on the other hand, it is remarkable how conservative Eichhorn proves to be, steering clear, as he does, without, of course, foreseeing one of them, of all the conclusions of the Tübingen school, which has claimed for itself something like critical omniscience. He unhesitatingly accepts the fourth Gospel, not so much on the ground of external testimony, as from the confirmation of this by the internal character of the work as suitable to the age and to John the Apostle. His view of the personality of the Saviour is low enough; and his explanation of the Logos doctrine, as an attempt which the times demanded to clothe the older Messianic teaching in forms suitable to the Alexandrian and Hellenistic mind, cannot be sustained; but he rightly contends that the peculiarities of the Gospel are only met by the union, in its author, of Palestinian birth and training with Hellenistic culture; and hence he upholds the tradition as to John's Asia Minor residence. Even before the new debate begun by Bretschneider, in 1820, there were German theologians inclined to the negative side; but Eichhorn thus refuses them a hearing: "The case, in my opinion, is so completely settled in favor of the Gospel, that to refute at length the difficulties started is superfluous."† With equal readiness he accepts the three epistles,‡ and even the Apocalypse is defended as the work of the Apostle—and that not at all in the Tübingen sense, as breathing a Jewish rather than Pauline spirit, but as in full harmony with the fourth Gospel, differing only as poetry from prose.§

* "Einleitung in das Neue Testament," i. pp. 486–490.
† Ibid., p. 240, note.
‡ Ibid., ii. pp. 320–330.
§ Ibid., ii. pp. 375–388.

In this acceptance of the Apocalypse Eichhorn even opposes Michaelis and Semler; and hardly anything has been better said by the orthodox, though he does not regard its symbolism as pointing to more than the downfall of Judaism and Paganism, and to the final blessedness.* In equally striking conflict with the future Tübingen school is his view of the integrity and genuineness of the Acts of the Apostles; and the current is now really going back, from Baur and Schwegler, to this leader of rationalism, who here represents so ably the traditional position.† It would be too much to expect further concurrence; and hence Eichhorn accepts only ten of Paul's Epistles, denying him the pastoral ones and that to the Hebrews, though the former have much that is Pauline, and may be from the Apostle's scholars, while the latter is in every way remarkable as a Christian interpretation of Judaism—to which, however, Eichhorn does not commit himself—and probably from some Christian of the Alexandrine school, the date being before the fall of Jerusalem.‡ James, however, he accepts, pronouncing its doctrine in harmony with Paul, as also 1 Peter, ascribing its Paulinizing features to the probable influence of Mark; while even the Second Epistle of Peter and Jude are set aside with no small forbearance and allowance in their favor; for 2 Peter may have been written by a scholar of Peter after his death, and Jude probably falls before the destruction of Jerusalem, and might thus have been used, as Eichhorn believes, by the author of 2 Peter.§

I have gone into these details, once for all, to show that it was not merely by its free handling of the canon of Scripture that the rationalism of this school led to such fatal results. However important the canon, and injurious its mutilation, the question of faith in a true revelation, and the submission of

* "Einleitung in das Neue Testament," ii. pp. 391–493.

† Ibid. There is something almost touching in the honest, simple-hearted ignorance with which Eichhorn speaks, with the Tübingen mines beneath his feet: "These examples will suffice to prove the age and credibility of the Acts from the connection of their contents with the state of the world in the period A.D. 32 to 65; if this should ever be doubted (*as, so far as I know, it never yet has been*), the instances could be greatly increased."—*Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, ii. pp. 65–71.

‡ The references in the "Einleitung" are: to the Pastoral Epistles, vol. iii. pp. 385–410; to Hebrews, iii. pp. 506, 507.

§ For James, see "Einleitung in das Neue Testament," iii. 575–581; for 1 Peter, iii. 614; for 2 Peter, iii. 630–636; for Jude, iii. 655, 656.

reason to it, is still more important. This Eichhorn and his contemporaries wanted, in regard even to the admitted doctrines of Paul and the other apostles. Even their conception of these doctrines is very low; and the summaries, for example, which Eichhorn gives of Paul's Epistles represent him as only a gifted human teacher, continuing after his conversion, due partly to a flash of lightning, the work of one still more gifted, who had left the doctrines of God, Providence, and Immortality in such a state as to need further explanation and development.* But, however highly Christ may be exalted as a teacher—as, for example, in speaking of the Epistle to the Colossians—there is no sympathy with what follows from this admission in the way of accepting his doctrine of salvation; and thus, by a low interpretation, the results of a so far sound and tolerable canon are brought to nothing. The question of the canon, or even of exegesis in detail, is thus not the vital one, however grave each is, for Christianity. It is the presence or absence of sympathy with those radical ideas of revelation —sin, redemption, grace—which the worst canon and the worst interpretation (if it have any honesty at all) cannot but supply. The canon of Eichhorn was even larger than that of Schleiermacher; but who will compare them, grievously defective as Schleiermacher here is, in point of sympathy with radical Christian truth and sentiment?†

Of the many representatives of the critical school who succeeded Eichhorn it is only necessary to mention Dr. H. E. G. Paulus (1761–1851), for many years Professor of Theology at Heidelberg. His most important works are those which bear upon the life of our Saviour; and he has the merit of having shown, in his "Philologisch-Kritischer Commentar über das Neue Testament, 1800," how utterly untenable the rationalistic principle of reducing all the supernatural facts of our Lord's life to purely natural causes is, when consistently applied. As Toland regarded the pillar of cloud and fire as an ordinary signal, and as Eichhorn held something of the same kind,‡ so Paulus perpetually labors to clear up the mistakes of those who quite innocently exalted, in their narratives, to miracle what was only natural fact. Thus, Zacharias in the Temple

* "Einleitung in das Neue Testament," iii. pp. 1–12.
† See Appendix, Note H.
‡ "Einleitung in das Alte Testament," iii. p. 203.

fancied that the cloud of incense was an angel; the wise men, who had lost sight of the star in the valley, found it again from a height, and, as they supposed, shining from the sky over the place where Jesus was; and the dove, at the Baptism, only happened to alight on the Saviour's head.

This theory, involving so much violence and absurdity, was finally exploded by Strauss in the first cast of his "Leben Jesu," in 1835. But Paulus was perfectly sincere in holding it; and more than a quarter of a century afterwards he said that it was not so much to remove the stumbling-block of miracle that the work was written as to bring out the true character of Jesus in harmony with Christian rationalism. He held that the character of Jesus was perfect, and that this alone was meant by his being the Messiah and the Son of God. It is to the credit of Paulus that he believed so much; but even a perfect humanity goes beyond the limits of experience; nor is a solution given by the striking figure employed by him in his old age, in a conversation with a younger theologian, that Jesus was a wonder, though not a miracle, like a meteoric stone, coming from a higher world, and leaving its mark in this.* Possibly the views of Paulus advanced, as in his later years he found himself surrounded by a returning tide of faith. In a very interesting work, published by him in 1830, and containing a collection of his reviews, among others that which dealt with the celebrated dissertation of Dr. Hahn of Leipzig, proposing to turn rationalists out of the Church, he goes much farther than Eichhorn in accepting the testimony of Scripture; contends earnestly that his own negative conclusions as to the Trinity, Original Sin, and the Atonement are supported by the sacred writers—as earnestly as any of the orthodox could assert the opposite—and while holding the necessity of going aside from Scripture on a limited number of points, such as demoniacal possession, still appeals to it, with confidence, as a rationalistic book, which the scholasticism of later creeds has corrupted. No doubt the words of Augustine standing on Dr. Hahn's title-page as a motto against rationalism still apply to Paulus: "Qui in Evangelio quod vultis creditis, quod non vultis non creditis, vobis potius quam Evangelio

* This remarkable comparison I remember to have read—I believe in the "Studien und Kritiken"—after the death of Dr. Paulus; but I cannot recover the passage.

creditis;"* but as it has been common to say that the rationalists of that day admitted that Scripture was against them, it was only fair to Dr. Paulus to show how far, at least in his case, such an allegation would be beside the truth.†

Thus the great stream of theology in the Universities had descended, not without many protests and some inconsistencies, from the supernaturalism of Ernesti and Michaelis, till it had reached, in the end of the century, the naturalism of Paulus. But we must now turn to a movement which may also be called critical, though arising in another field, and which has so far unhappily compromised the great name of Lessing, through his connection with the work of Reimarus, the Wolfenbüttel Fragmentist. It is necessary to narrate the incidents affecting both together, and under the name of Lessing, whose position is the more important.

I take the principal facts in Lessing's life for granted—his birth, as the eldest son of a Lutheran pastor at Camenz, in Upper Lusatia, in 1729; his great mastery in classical literature acquired at school and at Leipzig in connection with his destination to the ministry; his preference of a literary life; his starting with Moses Mendelssohn and Nicolai the periodical *Briefe die neueste Literatur betreffend* in 1759; his sudden departure and residence as secretary with General Tauentzien, at Breslau, till 1765; his equally sudden return to literature, and his struggles in Berlin and Hamburg, till his appointment by the Grand-duke of Brunswick as keeper of the Wolfenbüttel Library, an office which he held from 1769 till his death in 1781.

The vigor and originality of Lessing as a dramatic writer, and not less as a critic in literature and art, are universally acknowledged; but, great as his influence was, he can hardly be held to have made the same mark in theology. Probably the rationalistic movement would have reached the same issues without him, though his acuteness, learning, and power undoubtedly contributed much to its development. But he had too many sympathies in his nature to act fully in any one direction. The popular philosophy found him so far an associate

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* "Contra Faustum," xvii. p. 3; "Opera," viii. p. 219.

† The title of Dr. Paulus's work is as follows: "Berichtigende Resultate aus dem neuesten Versuch des Supranaturalismus gegen den biblisch-christlichen Rationalismus." Wiesbaden, 1830.

of Nicolai and Mendelssohn, and an editor of Reimarus; the critical, an ally of Eichhorn and Paulus in assailing the letter of the Bible in his discussions on the Resurrection, and yet striving, and in a deeper sense than they, to preserve its spirit, in his "Education of the Human Race;" while the mysterious charge of pantheism, brought out in the well-known disclosures of Jacobi, shows that there was in him enough of bent in that direction to sympathize with the tendencies that were soon to find utterance in Schelling. Anyhow regarded, the religious side of Lessing is a problem, and some parts of his conduct are as unjustifiable as they are unaccountable; but the whole facts seem better explained by ascribing to him such a various sympathy, and with this a certain indecision and scepticism, than by any other theory.

Lessing had been some years in Wolfenbüttel, and had published two selections of works found in its library. Among the first of these was, curiously enough, a tract of Leibnitz defending the received doctrine as to the duration of future punishments, which Lessing also so far supported against Eberhardt's "New Apology for Socrates," by showing that Eberhardt here made Socrates contradict Plato. The second embraced a little treatise on a question of art. Then came out under his editorship a series of fragments of an entirely different description, which excited the widest sensation. Of this series, known as the "Wolfenbüttel Fragments," and of the author of the work, Hermann Samuel Reimarus, we have now to speak.

Reimarus was born in the same year with Voltaire, 1694, in Hamburg, where his father was one of the masters in the Johanneum, and his future father-in-law, Fabricius, so well-known by his descriptive catalogues of Greek and Latin writers, was another; and he himself, after being trained under these scholars, and afterward in Jena, abandoning the ministry, became ultimately teacher in the Gymnasium of his native city, an office which he held for forty years, till his death in 1768.* It was his work to teach Hebrew and Oriental languages; he was an admirable classical scholar, as appears by an edition of Dio Cassius; and he wrote several treatises on Natural Religion, evincing a great knowledge of natural science. The best-known of these is entitled "The Principal Truths of Natural

* Strauss's "Reimarus," pp. 5–7. Leipzig, 1862.

Religion Defended and Illustrated." It was published in 1755, and may be read in an old English translation of date 1766, which conveys a favorable idea of the vigor with which, against Lucretius, La Mettrie, and other disciples of Epicurus, he upholds the argument from design, the wisdom and goodness of Providence, and the doctrine of Immortality. There is here a trace of Wolff, but none of the popular philosophy with which his name has been connected; and it could never have been suspected that he had any quarrel with Christianity; for he speaks respectfully of Moses, and his life as a teacher must have involved compliances which suggested a full belief in the Gospel. Yet it is sad to think that for at least the last thirty years of his life he was an unbeliever, and was preparing one of the most hostile works against the Bible in its whole history. This work, which was only finished shortly before his death, bore the title," Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes."* It is still to some extent unpublished. Fragments of it were edited by Lessing in the way I shall afterward explain; some other portions have appeared in German periodicals or separately; but the only account of the whole is in the summaries and large extracts published in the work of Strauss upon Reimarus in 1862. With the help of this, I shall speak of the general views of Reimarus, and then, from his own works, state the connection of Lessing with this subject.

From the data before us it appears that Reimarus is almost the only one of his countrymen who brings the severe charges of the extreme English Deists against the Old and New Testament, and who transplants the style of Voltaire to Germany. His attacks upon the Old Testament I shall mostly pass over, as they largely repeat Bayle, Voltaire, and others, in ascribing to Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and David the lowest principles of action. There is one view which, so far as I know, is original —that Aaron and Miriam set up the golden calf in the hope to be thus rid of Moses, and that he, suspecting some evil, and returning from the Mount, secured himself and propitiated them by arranging the sacrificial system, with all its perquisites, in his brother's favor.† In the other writings of the Old Testament Reimarus finds no compensation for the failure of its

* "Apology or Defence of the Rational Worshippers of God." Strauss's "Reimarus," p. 20.

† Strauss's "Reimarus," pp. 108–110.

histories. The Psalms reveal only the character of persons who sing and pray, while, like David, they are full of revenge and selfishness; the Proverbs, though containing good maxims, such as natural reason suggests, have nothing worthy of a religion specially revealed; and the Prophets merely uphold the worship of Jehovah, which has already proved so ineffectual.* He grants, indeed, as taught in them, the doctrine of a Messiah, and of the line of David, pious and righteous, who should be a Deliverer, and who was accordingly expected in that sense (and here, like Strauss, he overturns Collins); but he wholly denies that the Messiah is set forth in a suffering character, or in any higher light than a great earthly monarch; and he goes through the whole of what has been called the Christology of the Old Testament to refute such an interpretation.†

When we come to the New Testament we find that Jesus is the only one of the Biblical characters of whom Reimarus has a good word to say. He grants him a high and pure morality. Of his summation of law and prophets in love to God and man he remarks: "How could the essence of true worship and of man's chief duties to himself and others be more shortly or better expressed?" That God is perfect is the true practical idea. The Lord's Prayer is a model prayer; and the golden rule is just, when understood to prescribe, not what we should avoid, but actually do. "Such doctrines are great, noble, nay, divine, and we shall rarely or almost never find them among heathen moralists, at least as based on so universal a philanthropy."‡ But while Jesus thus advanced so far by his preaching of repentance, including this morality, all was ruined by the addition, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He supposed himself to be the Jewish Messiah, taking up into this idea worldly rule, extended to the heathen; and his disciples fully shared his expectations. There is no evidence that he had any more spiritual view, and all that seems to favor this in the Gospels—as, for example, his prediction of his own sufferings and death—is unhistorical. The character of Jesus thus suffers at the hands of Reimarus, not so much in his misquoting Old Testament texts in application to himself, as in giving himself false credit by a scene between himself and the Baptist, where an affected ignorance is brought in to add weight to

* Strauss's "Reimarus," pp. 132, 155, 156. † Ibid., pp. 156–158.
‡ Ibid., pp. 183, 184.

testimony, and by miracles which he did not care to have investigated, as well as by shrinking from collision with his enemies, which a suffering Messiah could not have done. As a proof of his worldly views, Reimarus refers to his cry of desertion on the cross, which, if uttered, was a confession of failure.* Such a failure took place when he attempted by his triumphal entry to set up his kingdom; for not only had he miscalculated, but by his clearing of the Temple he broke the peace, and also by his invectives gave the authorities—though "he taught an infinitely better morality and religion than the Scribes and Pharisees"—a good cause against Him, so that "the Sanhedrim could not act otherwise than it did, and Jesus is not innocent, but died for his own crime."† Such is the sad incoherence of Reimarus's scheme, and he can only lament "that Jesus, by his aim to be the Messiah, and the doubtful and disorderly means taken by him to gain his point, has so stained and obscured the memory of his services to practical religion." "Still," he adds, "we must not cease to value as they deserve, and to apply to our good, his lessons of piety, philanthropy, and inward reformation."‡

The disciples now adjusted the plan to altered circumstances. Knowing that a minority of the people expected a suffering Messiah, they gave out that Jesus was that Messiah, and that he had foretold his own sufferings and death and resurrection, and, in connection with these, the redemption of the world and the extension of his kingdom to the Gentiles. They invented the story of the resurrection and of the different appearances of their Master, and, to give all credit, stole away the body, which they could easily do, as the garden was in their own hands, and the Roman guard was a later addition to the story; and then, having added the tale of the ascension, appeared in Jerusalem to found a kingdom different from that of Jesus, but with the same worldly motives.§ Such is the substance of the celebrated discussion on "The Plan of Jesus and his Disci-

* Strauss's "Reimarus," pp. 187, 188. Reimarus here, probably without remembering it, repeats the accusation of Celsus (Origen against Cels., § ii. 24): "Why does he entreat, lament, and pray to escape the fear of death?"

† "Konnte der hohe Rath nicht anders handeln als er gehandelt hat, und ist demnach Jesus nicht unschuldig, sondern um seines eigenen Verbrechens willen gestorben."—*Reimarus*, p. 198.

‡ Strauss's "Reimarus," p. 198. § Ibid., pp. 210–215.

ples." It would be a waste of words to refute such a monstrosity, intellectual and moral. It can only be refuted as Eusebius has done, long before it appeared, by putting a speech into the mouth of the leader of the Apostles, laying out the plan, and exhorting his brethren to go out and preach truth by falsehood, and gain worldly ends by torture and death.* Gigantic indeed must have been the counter-stroke that enabled the apostles, when crushed down by the crucifixion, in so short a time to invent a new system of doctrine, including the Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, and universal kingdom of Jesus, and to adapt all this to their new circumstances. They had also to arrange and mutually rehearse the narratives of various apparitions, which, however, was not so consistent but that Reimarus discovers in it flagrant contradictions; and, last of all, there was before them the equal difficulty of achieving success. This success Reimarus accounts for by saying that they stilled their own remorse of conscience, like ancient law-givers in general, by persuading themselves that the good of the world required such measures, and then rose to a boundless enthusiasm —an enthusiasm which led to the scene of Pentecost; that they originated a community of goods, which was a powerful though a soon exhausted means of proselytism; that they kindled hopes of an immediate return of Jesus and of a share in his kingdom, which men eagerly took up in spite of his rejection and death; and also that they made way by the report and appearance of continued miracles, not one of which, however, was true. It is rather wonderful, after all this, that Reimarus adds as a fifth attraction the pious walk of the early Christians according to Christ's exalted rules, making this remark: "As to opinions, there may be difference when their objects are remote, or rest on foreign testimony; but virtue is a thing that all feel and respect."† What room there was for virtue in such a society he has himself shown; and in his character of the Apostle Paul he annihilates every feature of excellence, bringing him down to the level of pride, jealousy, and hypocrisy, on which stood the so-called heroes of the Old Testament. Where, then, was the lever by which the Apostles moved the world? When the common purse was empty, and the thousand years' kingdom

* This remarkable speech is to be found in "Demonstratio Evangelica," book iii. §§ 113, 114, p. 203–207. Migne's edition.

† Strauss's "Reimarus," pp. 233–244.

still hopelessly distant—as Reimarus confesses it could not long be expected—could enthusiasm and false miracles and doubtful morals still prevail? To questions like these Reimarus has given no answer, and could give none. Indeed, what hope could one have for the human race, what respect for himself as a member of it, if the greatest religion the world has ever known could thus arise and fill the earth?

We are wholly unable to see what fascination a scheme like this could have for Lessing, or how he could so earnestly desire to make it known after its author's death. His acquaintance with Reimarus was only imperfect, and acquired during the last year of his life; though during the two following years, ere leaving Hamburg, he came to know his son and daughter intimately, and maintained with them a close correspondence. As the father did not judge that the time had come for the publication of his work, his children resisted the importunities of Lessing; and only yielded on his promise to keep the authorship an entire secret. It is not absolutely certain that Lessing had seen the whole work; but Strauss regards this as having all probability in its favor; and as the family had allowed him to see in their home a first draft, so they also sent at his request copies of any amended portions that he might require, as the work had been constantly retouched, almost till the date of its author's death.* Lessing then adopted the unhappy expedient of giving out that he had found the work in the Ducal library, and accordingly edited it under that representation. The first fragment came out in 1774, and bore the title "On the Toleration of Deists," that being supposed to be the least offensive to begin with. What liberties Lessing allowed himself may be seen from these words of the preface, which, with some notes, accompanied the publication: "They are, as I say, fragments of a work, but I cannot decide whether of a work actually finished and destroyed, or of one never completed. For they have no universal title; their author is nowhere given; and I have by no means been able to discover how and when they came into our library. Nay, I am not certain that they are fragments of one work, but I conclude as much from this, that they have all one object, and all bear upon revealed religion, and more especially the criticism of Bible history." Lessing goes even so far as to suggest deceptively

* Strauss's "Reimarus," pp. 13–16.

a false author for the book, naming a well-known Deist, John Lorenz Schmidt, who had not only translated the Bible, but Tindal's "Christianity as Old as the Creation." "Since, to judge by the handwriting and the external appearance of his papers, they may be about seventy years old; since, from many passages there reveals itself an unusual acquaintance with the Hebrew language, and the author reasons throughout on the principles of the Wolffian philosophy—all these circumstances together have suggested to me a man who lived about the aforesaid time here in Wolfenbüttel, and under the protection of a wise and kind ruler found the toleration which the wild orthodoxy of the times would have denied him in the rest of Europe—I mean Schmidt, the Wertheim translator of the Bible."*†

It is impossible to suppose that Lessing had any prevailing sympathy with the Fragmentist, and yet we find him restlessly active to bring his work to the light. In the end of 1774 he is engaged in negotiations with Voss, the Berlin bookseller, with a view to its publication with his own name on the title-page as editor, though his friends Nicolai and Mendelssohn most strongly dissuaded him from this step. He writes to his own brother of his intention to "play the theologians a little comedy" by this publication, which, in allusion to a recent work of Semler, "A Free Examination of the Canon," he proposes to call "A Still Freer Examination of the Canon of the Old and New Testament." The theologians in question were those of Semler's school, for whom he had less respect than for the orthodox, believing that their attempts to explain away miracles only weakened their cause, and that, in seeking to make men rational Christians, they made them highly irrational philosophers.‡ It is probable, therefore, that his wish to expose the half-and-half position of the newer theologians was

* "Correspondance." K. G. Lessing, Feb. 2, 1774.

† Strauss, who justifies and even admires the life-long silence of Reimarus in regard to his Deism, while conducting all the while the work of a Christian teacher, sees apparently nothing wrong in the preface above quoted, and in other liberties of Lessing: for he speaks approvingly of the "false scent on which he led the curiosity of the public and the hatred of theologians" (p. 17); but he does not venture to quote the passages in the text, which are translated from Lessing's Werke, p. 822, 1 vol. edition. Göschen, Leipzig, 1841.

‡ Letters to his brother, Feb. 2 and Nov. 11, 1774. Lessing's Werke, pp. 998–1000.

one motive for his action. However, difficulties arose, and among others those connected with the censorship; and then, as from his position in Wolfenbüttel he was free from this hinderance, he at length, in 1777, edited other five fragments (so-called), covering the origin of the work with another set of mystifications: "I could hardly furnish at once the strongest and boldest parts; the papers are still in too great confusion; and the thread often breaks off where one would least expect it, so that, till I am better acquainted with them, I content myself with the following fragments, which I submit without further introduction."* The fragments were five in number—the first "On the Decrying of Reason from the Pulpits;" the second "On the Impossibility of a Revelation which all Men could be reasonably called upon to Believe;" the third "On the Passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea," heaping up the difficulties since repeated by Dr. Colenso; the fourth went to show that the books of the Old Testament were not written to reveal a religion; and the fifth and last, which was the most important, opened up ten contradictions in the Gospel narratives of the Resurrection. These fragments Lessing followed by a set of short essays, in which, while desiring to see them fully replied to by the orthodox, he disclaimed agreement with the author's position. He urged that it was unreasonable to deny the possibility of a revelation and of miracles; that the passage through the Red Sea being a miracle, the natural difficulties which Reimarus started were not conclusive; and in particular, in regard to the Resurrection, it was one thing for contradiction to have been found between the original apostolic witnesses, and another thing between subsequent recorders of their testimony, like the Evangelists; and that, as there was no evidence of such fatal contradiction of the first sort, and as the cause had been long won, its success was now a presumption of credibility, and the case could not be fairly reopened.

At the end of these notes Lessing published more than the half of an essay, which he afterwards issued in full in 1780, on "The Education of the Human Race." The design of this was to separate his position more clearly from that of Reimarus, because, in the paper in question, he professes his belief in revelation. What education is to the individual, revelation is

* Lessing's Werke, p. 824.

to the species; and though Lessing does not hold that anything is revealed which the human race might not ultimately have reached by its own powers, yet, as in the parallel case of education, there is a more early, rapid, and certain development, than would otherwise have been possible. The Jewish and Christian dispensations are such stages in the education of the world, from which miracles and prophecies are not excluded. The Scriptures of the Old Testament and of the New were the lesson-books (*Elementar-bücher*) of this process; and hence Lessing judges very differently of their worth from the Fragmentist. The Jews thus learned the oneness of God, which was further developed, though really lying in their own Scriptures, by their contact with the old Persian religion during the Captivity. Room was left for immortality, which, anticipated so far by the best of the people, was first clearly taught by Christ in connection with inward purity as a preparation for it; and to all this Lessing adds, that in the Scriptures of the New Testament there are hints and indications of such mysteries as the Trinity, the Incarnation, Original Sin, and the Atonement, which serve a useful purpose. Thus far, the race has been helped on by revelation with its schoolbooks; but in the New Testament there is a foreshadowing of a third stage beyond alike Old Testament and New, when goodness shall be loved for its own sake, and the human race shall reach its manhood.*

These fragments, and the conduct of Lessing in publishing them, produced a wide commotion, which his notes and elucidations tended but little to allay. Of the assaults which came from various quarters the principal was that by Pastor Goetze, in Hamburg, who was hardly qualified to grapple with Lessing, and whom the latter supposed to have attacked him as the result of a personal quarrel. It is only to be remarked, on Goetze's side, that he did not deny the distinction which Lessing drew between a revelation and the record of it (a distinction to which hardly any apologist of Christianity can be insensible), but only urged that Lessing had pushed this too far, so as to throw over the Bible in order to save Christianity in a Romish sense. Lessing, on the other hand, always writes as a

* Lessing's Werke, pp. 939–946. The outline of the "Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts" is given above once for all, though published in two parts.

Christian, and a better defender of Christianity than its own advocates; and his polemic, which runs through many pamphlets, among them a whole series called "Anti-Goetze," is designed, abating the wit and sarcasm with which he treats his antagonist, to show how needful it was, in the face of contradictions which could not easily be harmonized, and other imperfections in the narrative, to lay stress on the difference between the substance of Christianity and its Biblical records, and to prove how well this could be done without injuring revelation. It is well known that here Coleridge, in his "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit," has taken substantially the same ground with Lessing. This no doubt may be done in arguing for the general truth of Christianity against unbelievers; but the question of inspiration is not thereby reduced to unimportance; and we ought, I think, in the widest view of the facts, to go beyond Lessing and Coleridge in contending for the full inspiration of the Scripture record.

The most deeply painful thing in this controversy, in comparison of which the unmeasured severity of his satire is a slight offence, is the length to which Lessing allowed himself to go in defending the *incognito* of Reimarus. He affirmed that he had come to know that the work, of the existence of which he was till now aware only in fragments, was found in a completed form elsewhere, and that manuscript copies of it were in circulation. He denounced as a lie the report that Reimarus was the author—a report which had soon become current; and he even complained of the contradiction which the orthodox in Hamburg gave to this report, as the indirect spreading of a calumny.* The necessities of the controversy required him to publish sooner than he had intended, and not in the same series with the rest, but in a separate form, the last and worst fragment, which bore the title, "On the Plan of Jesus and his Disciples," and which, as will be remembered, charged the Saviour with worldly ambition and the disciples with fraud. It came out in 1778, and with the same alleged ignorance of its authorship; and thus, by a remarkable conjuncture of circumstances, a work intended to convict the Christian religion of originating in fraud was itself published in connection with a series of deviations from truth.

* Werke, "Anti-Goetze," No. 1 (p. 897), compared with preface to "Zweck Jesu," etc. (p. 919), and "Anti-Goetze," No. 10 (p. 915).

The appearance of this last fragment, with the promise or threatening of more, brought matters to a crisis. The Brunswick Government, at the instance of the Consistory, confiscated this fragment, and forbade the publication of more, as also the continuation of the Goetze controversy. The *Corpus Evangelicorum*, or Commission appointed to watch over the interests of Protestantism in the German Empire, was urged to obtain from the Imperial Council a condemnation of Lessing's procedure. It is impossible to excuse this prosecution, save on the ground that the Church system of Germany was then regarded as bound up with the interests of the Empire. But Lessing here acted with the same dexterity which, in the concealment of the authorship, he had carried so far. He boasted to his friends that he would divide the Imperial Council against itself, and gain the votes of the Catholic portion of it, by representing the prosecution as an attempt to enforce an extreme Lutheran view of the Scriptures at the expense of that of Rome. This, accordingly, he did in various publications, maintaining that he upheld a view of tradition akin to the Romish, which made Scripture less necessary than tradition to the transmission of the Christian faith.* Lessing here pleaded the conduct of the Apostle Paul in dividing the Sanhedrim; but the analogy will scarcely hold, as Paul fully agreed with the Pharisees as to the doctrine of the Resurrection, whereas Lessing differed from the Romanists on the vital point, that he did not put Church authority in the place of Scripture, but left the supposed tradition to individual conscience. How far this expedient of Lessing might have succeeded it is impossible to tell, as the Grand-duke of Brunswick exerted his influence on the side of forbearance, and the prosecution came to an end.

Lessing was not unwilling to be delivered from a controversy which, partly from his own false position, had caused him unspeakable annoyance; but he could not rest without making a movement by which, as he said, his opponents would be taken in flank, and would find themselves unable to meet him with his own weapons. This was the publication of a play, which turned out to be his last, and which he had meditated for three

* Lessing's Werke. Letter to his brother, July 23, 1778, and to Elise Reimarus, August 9, 1778 (pp. 1008-9). See also his last answers to Goetze (pp. 920-924).

years—"Nathan the Wise." The scene is laid in Jerusalem, and the design of the piece is to teach the superiority of natural piety and virtue to revealed religion. Nathan is a wealthy merchant, who has adopted the daughter of a Christian knight, Recha, keeping also in his house, as her companion, a Christian girl, Daja; and the scene opens with the return of Nathan from a journey, who finds that his house has been in flames, and his daughter rescued by a Templar. This Templar had been taken prisoner by Saladin, and pardoned by him from a supposed resemblance to a brother. The attachment of Recha and the Templar is the moving principle of the plot, which exhibits Nathan and Saladin in situations where they display great generosity and magnanimity; while the Patriarch of Jerusalem only comes on the scene to tempt the Templar to betray Saladin, and at length brings on a crisis by demanding Recha from Nathan, on the ground of her Christian baptism, which he had discovered. The lay brother, however, whom he sends to Nathan on this errand, rises above the narrowness of proselytism, and also gives him information as to the parentage of Recha and the Templar. This evidence in a closing scene is produced, showing them to be sister and brother, and the children of the lost brother of Saladin by a Christian mother—a result which, if it frustrates the romance of the piece, is meant to rise into the higher region of universal brotherhood. It is easy to see that Lessing had here got beyond not only the reply of his old antagonists, but of any others. A play is no argument, as he had the making of the characters in his own hand; and he has not given one on the Christian side the commanding position of Saladin or Nathan; as the Templar and lay brother do not balance either of these, while Daja is only an amiable enthusiast bent on propagandism, and the Patriarch is a monster of hypocrisy and cruelty. These objections, to say nothing of the liberty taken with Saladin, who was far from being the apostle of tolerance which Lessing makes him, apply equally to the celebrated apologue of the three rings in the speech of Nathan to Saladin, which has been held up as the gem of the piece. An Eastern ruler had a precious opal ring, which possessed the power, when rightly used, of making the wearer beloved of God and man. As he wished it to remain forever in his house, he gave it to the son whom he loved best, with the charge to him thus to hand it down, and with it the rule of the family. After long generations it came into the

hands of a father who loved his three sons equally well, and promised each of them apart the coveted treasure. As he could not keep his word to all the three, he had two other rings made so like that he himself could not distinguish them, and, having privately given one to each of his three sons, died. Each makes, and stands to, his claim; but the judge before whom they appear pronounces them all deceived and deceivers, inasmuch as the rings had not exerted their power of making them love each other. He, therefore, supposes that the original ring had somehow been lost, and that the father had made three fictitious ones in its place. Probably, also, adds the judge, the father had wished to end a system of preference undesirable among his children; but if they still stood to their exclusive claims, let each prove these by piety, self-denial, and charity; then, after thousands of years, a wiser man than he would fill his place and judge between them. It is impossible not to admire the beauty of this, as of other parts of Lessing's poem; and though it may owe less to his invention, if it be true, as Voltaire has asserted, that the fable of three rings had long been in use in the East, as applied to the Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan religions, still the skill with which the moral is brought out is great and seductive.* It is, therefore, the more necessary to touch on the fallacy here concealed, as it runs through the whole play. If indifferentism is to be the rule, then it must be carried out in regard to all religions, even the most debasing, and not limited to the mutual exclusiveness of three that adhere to the unity of God. Further, this equality of these three religions cannot be admitted; and there will be in our days immensely fewer who will concede this, at least to the Mohammedan. Again, is it not the fact that indifferentism to doctrinal opinions has never been the soil in which the warmest philanthropy has flourished, and that those who have been the most capable of practically extending their sympathies be-

* This is stated by Voltaire in his Letters on Rabelais and other authors accused of speaking ill of the Christian religion. The reference to the three rings occurs in the letter on Swift, who is said by Voltaire to have borrowed from this parable the three coats of Peter, Martin, and Jack, in his "Tale of a Tub." The language of Voltaire is express as to the antiquity of the parable: "The fable of the three rings is very ancient; it is of the age of the Crusades." Then, after stating it, not quite like Lessing, he adds, "The good old man is Theism: the three children, the Jewish, Christian, and Mussulman religions."—*Œuvres*, vol. xvii. p. 313.

yond their own pale—as, for example, Christian missionaries—have prized most highly the deposit of their own faith? Theophilanthropy, contrary to what Lessing teaches, has done little for the world. It has been the earnest faith, not of mere bigots or hypocrites, like the Patriarch of Jerusalem, but of zealous Christians, that has made Christianity fruitful of good works, and given it, though it is neither the first nor the last of Lessing's three in history, the hold of the world.

Our estimate of the actual creed of Lessing, now that all the materials are before us, is very difficult to fix. I have not touched on the discovery alleged to have been made by the philosopher F. H. Jacobi, who, as the result of conversations held with Lessing at Wolfenbüttel and elsewhere, in July, 1780, gave out that Lessing had confessed to him that he was a Pantheist. The evidence of this was given after Lessing's death, which took place in 1781; but, as it was discredited by Mendelssohn and Lessing's other friends, I would not build on it with the same confidence as if Lessing had confirmed it by any independent published testimony.* The discord in Lessing is sufficient without adding this fresh element of confusion. On the one side is the fact of publishing the Fragments, and the undoubted sympathy, so far, with their results as fatal to a particular orthodoxy; and there is also the avowed design of the "Nathan," and its author's utterances in regard to it. "The theologians of all revealed religions will inwardly rail at it." "Enough, if it be only read with interest; and if, among a thousand readers, only one learns from it to doubt the evidence and the universality of his religion."† On the other side are the strain of earnest protest against identification with the Fragmentist, the claim in many ways put forward to be a defender of Christianity, and the "Education of the Human Race." "I have never written," says he, "till the editing of the Fragments, nor have I publicly maintained, anything that could expose me to the suspicion of being a secret enemy of the Christian religion. I have written more than one trifle in which I have not only put the Christian religion in the best light I could, according to its doctrines and teachers, but have, in particular, defended the Lutheran orthodox religion against Catholics, So-

* See Appendix, Note I.

† Letters to his brother, November 7, 1778, and April 18, 1779. Lessing's Werke, pp. 1011–1015.

cinians, and Neologists (Neulinge). . . . Shall I, then, now make shipwreck, through my carelessness, on the rock which I have escaped in the stormy period of violent passions, now when softer winds are blowing me towards the same haven in which I hope to land as gladly as my opponent?"* It is impossible to harmonize these extremes; nor are they met by the explanation of Lessing to the younger Reimarus on his publication of the first part of the "Education of the Human Race," in 1777: "The 'Education' is the work of a good friend, who willingly makes to himself all kinds of hypotheses and systems, to have the pleasure of again tearing them in pieces. His hypothesis would throw a long way back the point aimed at by my Unknown. But what matter? Let every one say what he thinks the truth, and let the truth be left with God."† As we began we must end by saying that on his religious side Lessing is a problem—perhaps the greatest in the history embraced in these inquiries; and, among other sad thoughts suggested by the spectacle of so great a genius divided against itself, the saddest is that a life so full of struggle—and on its literary side of struggle not endured in vain—should have wanted the unity, the brightness, and the peace which the full acceptance of Christianity would have brought to such a nature.

III. We come now to our *third* form of rationalism, the *ethical*, in connection with which it is necessary only to mention the name of Kant. This is not the place to give any biography of this great philosopher, the facts of whose life are so widely known. Only one or two circumstances may be hinted at as bearing on the prevailingly *ethical* character of his philosophy and religion. His Scottish extraction, as the grandson of a settler on the Baltic coast in the end of the seventeenth century, together with the simplicity and piety of his father and German mother, who preserved this tradition, will account so far for this feature. Further, his own blameless and earnest life, all through his early struggles, and till in 1770 he obtained the place of Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in Königsberg, in his forty-sixth year, along with his destination for the Church, must have contributed to the same result. He yield-

* "Anti-Goetze," No. 7 (Lessing's Werke, p. 909. 1778).

† Letter to J. A. H. Reimarus, the son of the Fragmentist, April 6, 1778 (Werke, p. 1008).

ed, indeed, so far to the rationalizing tendencies of the period in respect of doctrine; but his high and austere morality could only spring from an uncorrupted life. Still further, we see that the rest of his philosophy all tends to an ethical solution and consummation. His mind ripened fastest on the side of physical science, and he was able, in his work on "The Theory of the Heavens," dedicated in 1755 to Frederick the Great, to anticipate the discovery of outlying planets like Uranus and Neptune; but this was not the deepest tendency of his nature. Even his immortal "Critik der reinen Vernunft," published in 1781, could not stand alone, with its annihilating criticism and rejection of all other than regulative ideas of reason; and hence, in his "Critique of Practical Reason," published in 1788, with other ethical works, he had to find in conscience what he could not find in speculative intelligence—a contact with the world of absolute reality, and a hold for the beliefs of God, Virtue, and Immortality. His system was thus rounded off by ethics; and therefore it was to be expected that if, in religion, his views should not rise above what might require to be called rationalism, it would not be distinctively a critical rationalism, like that of scholars like Eichhorn or even Lessing, but would have, from first to last, a prevailingly ethical character.

Kant might have completed his metaphysical and ethical systems as they stand, and yet have maintained silence as to their relation to Christianity. But this he would not do; and as he had been in the habit of stating this relation in his Lectures under the head of Philosophy of Religion, so he resolved to make it known through the Press. Hence he published the work which bears the title, "Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft" (Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason). The work consists of four books, of which Kant inserted the first in the Berlin *Monatschrift* in 1792. Liberty was denied by the Government of the day to proceed farther in this way, and he could only overcome the obstacle by obtaining a license from his own University to print the work in Königsberg. This was in 1793; but immediately afterwards he was censured by a Cabinet order, and forbidden to lecture on any subject bearing on religion. This was in the days of the French Revolution, when the liberty of the Press was much restricted; but with the accession of the new king, Frederick William III., in 1797, the restraint was removed, seven years before Kant's death, which took place in 1804. These details are

not unimportant, as showing the contrast between the days of Frederick the Great and of his nephew and successor, Frederick William II., when the scenes in France produced everywhere a reaction in favor of orthodoxy. But Kant suffered unjustly, being no revolutionist, and his rationalism, however much to be regretted, being couched in the language, not of propagandism, but of abstruse philosophy. What this amounts to we have now to inquire; and happily, however obscure in some parts, his book on Religion can be understood by itself, without drawing much upon his still more recondite treatises. Let it only be premised—and this is the radical defect of Kant's religious scheme — that religion is by him subordinated to morality, as God is only required as an upholder of the connection between the moral law and happiness, and is not directly revealed as a Law-giver.

It is remarkable that Kant begins his work with a recognition of evil in man—the first book being occupied with the "Conjunction of Good and Evil in Human Nature." He preaches a much more Scriptural doctrine of human depravity than almost any philosopher. He wholly rejects the idea that evil arises only from sense; nor is he more favorable to the view that it is mere privation or metaphysical imperfection. His enlarged knowledge of physical geography, as of human nature—though he had never been fifty miles from home—makes him set aside with quiet irony Rousseau's picture of an innocent savage state; nor does he, like Bahrdt, Basedow, and all the popular philosophy school, look for a millennium brought in by the school-master. He sees in the Bible story of the Fall the image of a wilful and perpetual apostasy; and he confirms the doctrine of the third chapter of John (expressly alluding to it), that virtue cannot return by a reform, but must by a revolution.* This deeper view in Kant, as Julius Müller has said, has given great offence to the defenders of human goodness, as a kind of apostasy of the philosopher from himself.† But there is still in this otherwise striking chapter of philosophical theology a short-coming from the Bible doctrine. This doctrine harmonizes the absolute imperative of the moral law with grace; but Kant cannot go so far without, as he thinks, surrendering liberty. The one half of the Apostle's exhorta-

* Kant's Werke, Leipzig, 1838. Rosenkranz's edition, vol. x. p. 54.
† Müller, "Lehre von der Sünde," vol. i. pp. 405–406.

tion is taken—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" the other is left—"For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

In his *second* book, which is on "The Struggle between the Good Principle and the Evil," Kant departs more and more widely from Christian ground. Too much of what he retains is Christian phrases and allegories, though he also makes important concessions to historical Christianity. The moral ideal of excellence, which every man ought to strive to recover, may be called the eternal and well-beloved Son of God; and this is the most of what Kant allows of the Incarnation; though he does not in every sense deny such an historical Incarnation as the Church teaches. It is, however, the morally good man in us—the man made new—that Kant chiefly regards, and on this new man he lays the burden of the work assigned, by Scripture literally interpreted, to Christ. *First*, God, seeing the new will to obey, may take the will for the deed, which is a kind of imputed righteousness or justification by faith; *secondly*, the sense of begun goodness may give encouragement to persevere, which is the presence of the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete; and *thirdly*, the pains and sufferings of repentance, in passing from the old state to the new, may make up a death and a satisfaction, which can be spoken of as the Atonement of the Son of God, adequate to wipe out sin, though Kant apparently does not see that the merit of the penitent is here greater than that of the innocent.* In these allegories Kant is weak as any other man; and all that his elaborate ethical interpretation does is to show that the ordinary orthodoxy meets real necessities, which philosophy itself recognizes. Why there should be not only a right but a duty thus morally to allegorize Scripture more than any other book Kant does not explain; though he does here unconscious homage to Him of whose life it is the record, but whose supernatural birth, miracles, and work generally, he, with his generation, had in the ordinary sense ceased to accept. He does not deny the possibility of the miraculous, however hard to distinguish between miracle and law; and he draws a striking picture of the life of Christ, as exhausting the moral law and serving for our example.† But the wonder was, that, conceding as he did moral perfection to the historical Christ, he should not have seen in him more than an example—a solitary character which

* Kant's Werke, vol. x. pp. 76–92. † Ibid., vol. x. pp. 93–96.

furnished the material of moral allegories, and rather have risen to welcome him in distinct homage as a miraculous exception to a sinful history, and the herald of deliverance to others.*

In his *third* book, which is entitled "The Victory of the Good Principle over the Evil," Kant brings forward as belonging to natural religion a desideratum which has never existed apart from revelation. This is the idea of a Church or universal moral society, in which alone he holds that the triumph of moral good can be achieved. Such is the dependence of human nature on what is outward, that a moral society or kingdom cannot be realized without the acceptance of something like a revelation, with an historical basis, and even a divinely given book, as the bond of union among its members. This is one of the darkest parts of the Kantian system; for it is hard to see why union, in recognizing the same moral standard, should not bind men together, instead of their needing some moral leader, whose supposed history, or institutions, or written words, add a positive and non-moral element to the constitution. It is, however, according to him, a fortunate thing that such a conjunction of the moral with the historical and positive exists in Christianity, and can be so thankfully accepted, while its documents all admit, even by straining, of a moral interpretation.† It will be seen that Kant here takes practically a very different ground from Tindal and the Deists, who not only denied that the positive could be revealed, but even that it could be submitted to. Kant, however, so far agrees with them that the moral is immeasurably the higher element of the two, and sees the progress of the kingdom of God in a kind of *euthanasia* and ultimate disappearance of historical religion. This process began with Christianity; for

* Kant expressly rejects the theory of the Fragmentist in regard to Christ's death as a political venture; as this was inconsistent with a memorial like the Lord's Supper, which would have been, as the record of failure, a morbid and self-contradictory institution.—KANT'S *Werke*, vol. x. p. 95, note.

† "Happy case! if such a book, that has come into human hands, with its statutes as articles of faith, contains at the same time, in its completeness, the purest moral religion, which can then be brought into the best harmony with these statutes as the vehicles of its introduction! On such a supposition, both on account of the end it has to serve and the difficulty of tracing back to natural laws the origin of such an enlightenment of mankind as is due to its operation, it can maintain its credit as a revelation." —KANT'S *Werke*, vol. x. p. 127.

Kant has an unjust idea of Judaism as being little more than a national and political system, while Christianity first rose to the conception of a moral kingdom of God. Something, then, in the same way with Lessing, though differing as to Judaism, Kant, as the prophet of rationalism, looks forth to the greater age, of which he seemed already to see the dawn, when the Church as triumphant should dispense with its own existence, and the moral part of religion, as the bond of union, be all in all.*

In his *fourth* and last book, which is entitled "On Worship and Superstition under the Sway of the Good Principle," the inherent conflict in his system between the moral and historical elements comes more strikingly, and even touchingly, to light. It is impossible not to recognize his profound honesty and the immense impression which the life and character of Christ had made upon him. He refuses to decide the question whether Christianity may or may not be a revelation in the technical sense, but speaks thus of Christ's moral teaching, taken as an actual fact and as shining in its own light: "Here is now a perfect religion, which can be set, in an intelligible and convincing manner, before all men by their own reason, and which, besides, has been illuminated by an example, the possibility and necessity of which as our rule, so far as we are capable of following it, all may see, without making the truth of these doctrines or the dignity and authority of their teacher to stand in need of any other attestation, such as miracles or scholarship, which belongs not to all."† It is truly wonderful that Kant should make so little of the historical side of a religion founded by such a Person, who, according to his repeated statements, has alone, among teachers, exhausted the moral law, and the narrative of whose life he admits to produce in mankind generally a deep belief in its truth, and to have an adaptation to the meanest capacities.‡ For want of the universality and necessity which he contends for as necessary to a religion in the highest sense, even a revelation from God in the form of history is repelled, or reduced to the mere surrogate of a moral

* Kant's Werke, vol. x. pp. 137–147. † Ibid., vol. x. p. 195.

‡ "How easily does such a narrative, especially under the promise of a great interest, find universal admission, and how deeply rooted is the faith in its truth, especially as that truth is founded on a document long accepted as authentic, and the faith in question is adapted to the most common human capacities!"—KANT'S *Werke*, vol. x. p. 219.

religion. Not only does he thus misunderstand the astonishing harmony in Christianity of the historical element and the ethical, but his appeal to Christian history to help him to realize a visible church becomes a nullity; because, as he himself justly says, a kingdom of God needs God for its builder. There never was, or will be, a church such as Kant supposes. By weakening faith (if not excluding it) in operations of grace, and in means of grace, save only as the habitual contemplation of all moral duties as Divine commandments, he takes away the motive to worship. Private prayer he allows, but only as meditation; church attendance, but only for the recitation of moral hymns or hearing of moral discourses; something like Baptism and the Lord's Supper, but only as admission into a *Tugendbund*, or the anniversary of its founder.* A more stern interdiction of direct communion with the living God was never written, and that, too, in the supposed interests of virtue. Kant was consistent in almost never going to church; but how then could he represent his own moral society as capable of cohesion, nay, as indispensable to the fulfilment of human destiny? A sad experience has shown in Germany, as elsewhere, that when Gospel history, with the preaching of the Incarnation, Atonement, and kingdom of a living Christ through whom God hears prayer and dispenses grace, is discarded, morality ceases to be a principle of association, and the rationalist anticipates Kant's Church triumphant by leaving the militant to its own fortunes. The only value of the rigorous criticism to which Kant subjects all Church ordinances is to discourage a mere superstitious and sentimental pietism, and to enforce that great principle to which even such exaggeration does homage, "By their fruits ye shall know them!"† In the contrast of living Christianity, as uniting in the closest embrace devotion and virtue with this one-sidedness of Kant, we have another proof of the Divine mission of Christ; for how should otherwise the

* Kant's Werke, vol. x. pp. 235–242.

† To this text (Matt. vii. 20) Kant, almost in the end of his work, appeals; though he must have been unfortunate in his experience, if those who laid stress on historical religion in his day could less abide this moral test than others. His closing sentence recalls the full descent from the days of Luther. "The right way is not to proceed from grace to virtue, but from virtue to grace" (nicht der rechte Weg sey, von der Begnadigung zur Tugend, sondern vielmehr von der Tugend zur Begnadigung fortzuschreiten).—*Werke*, vol. x. pp. 243–244.

unlettered Galilean teacher have surpassed one of the very greatest of moral philosophers? how should even his forerunner have connected repentance with faith in the making of atonement for sins? Happy, if the stern preacher of the "categorical imperative" in the German wilderness had enforced his testimony, like the Baptist, by a voice from heaven—a voice disclosing a deeper and more subduing mystery of love than reason can utter! Happy if he had repeated, not as a moral allegory, but as a literal truth—*the* truth of all history—the words, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of of the world!"

Thus are we brought to the end of the century, and to the development which rationalism found in it, so long as it streamed on with the prevailing tide. How a reaction began and gradually increased, even in the face of the same spirit and of its later manifestations, till the old rationalism could be said to have passed away, it is hardly the place here to consider. A few indications, however, may close this Lecture. It was not anything human, but the return of Christianity, as a living power from God, that wrought deliverance. Christ was recovered, and the Scripture reasserted, from the starting-point of a living experience in the Church, which led back to both. This, by universal consent, was the place of Schleiermacher in German Church history. The grave defects of his doctrinal system, and the failure of his Scripture criticism, few will now deny. But the living power of faith in a personal Christ, a faith kindled by experience among the Moravians in Niesky, and which all the influences of Plato and Spinoza, of Jacobi, Fichte, Schelling, and also of the Schlegels, might variously color or impair, but could not destroy, was again felt. In comparison of this the moral idealism of Kant wanted the soul of worship; and the gigantic systems of speculative philosophy which followed, though they recalled the grandeur and vagueness of the Infinite, could not give a personal Saviour and Friend. Here was the starting-point of a career full of speculation, but rich also in practical fruit in all directions, and which, alike in the pulpit and in the university, set out from the discord of sin to lead up to the harmony of grace. The deepest wound was thus given to rationalism by reviving the sense of guilt and misery; and a theology of the heart took the place of one of mere reason and criticism. The influence thus exerted, more especially through the long university career of Schleiermacher

in Halle and Berlin from 1804 to 1834, was unbounded; and, among his disciples, one is to be named as so far dividing with him, from an early date, the place of honor in recovering Germany to a believing theology. This was the son of a humble Göttingen Jew, who, trained in Hamburg in the very Gymnasium in which Reimarus had so long taught, was then baptized at the age of seventeen by the name Neander, and two years afterwards, by a deeper baptism, which made it fully true; and having been brought nearer to Christ by Plato and Plutarch, nearer still by the lectures of Schleiermacher in Halle, and nearest of all by the deep and anxious study of the New Testament, went forth to make the history of Christianity his theme, and, teaching it to ever-increasing crowds in Heidelberg and Berlin till 1850, to recall to the Church its long-departed heroes, and to diffuse their spirit and his own to the very ends of the earth. How great the recoil from rationalism in these words of the opening volume of his Church History! "We look upon Christianity, not as a power that has sprung up out of the hidden depths of man's nature, but as one which descended from above, when heaven opened itself anew to man's long-alienated race, a power which as, both in its origin and its essence, it is exalted above all that human nature can create out of its own resources, was designed to impart to that nature a new life, and to change it in its inmost principles."* The impulse which went forth from these men erelong changed the character of the Universities; and a host of theologians arose — Nitzsch, Twesten, Lücke, Ullmann, Tholuck, Olshausen, Julius Müller, Dorner, and many others, all marked, more or less, with the same impress, or yet more close in adherence to views which rationalism had set aside; while a theology nearer still to the old Biblical and confessional models, which had never died out, was represented, not without many features of independence, in men like Hengstenberg, Ebrard, and Delitsch; and even from another side a great scholar like Ewald redressed the unfairness of Schleiermacher to the Old Testament, and, with many and great drawbacks of his own, asserted in his own way the historical greatness and necessity of the Bible revelation. Through the solid and earnest teaching of these men and others whom they raised up around them, the German Church passed not only unharmed but benefited through the crisis connected with

* Neander's "Church History," vol. i. p. 2, Bohn's edition.

the publication of the "Leben Jesu" by Strauss in 1835; and the advantage thus gained, notwithstanding some reactions, more especially those connected with the so-called "Tübingen School" and its branches, has not been lost in the Universities to this day. The public history of the German people has also, on the whole, been favorable to this religious revival. The outburst of modern literature cannot be said to have been so conducive to Christian results as in England, for its greatest names have unhappily stood more apart from distinctively Christian faith. But the march of history otherwise has not been adverse. The Liberation War of 1813–14 produced a renewal not only of patriotic but of religious feeling, and this was deepened by the celebration of the Reformation Tercentenary in 1817. The long period of uneasiness and repression, which at length culminated in the storms and troubles of 1848, yielded in the end a great extension of religious liberty; and the Church, amid the confusion of that epoch, created the *Kirchentag* and the *Inner Mission*, and broke up much fallow ground by Christian enterprise. The subsequent revolutions of political history in bringing a Protestant power to the front, and in exhibiting the spectacle of German unity—a unity which needs to be maintained against Rome—have not only repaired the losses of the Reformation in the Thirty Years' War, but recalled the image and the work of Luther as the greatest memory of the German people. It cannot be denied that the victory of Bible Christianity is very incomplete, and that dark clouds are in the religious future of Germany. There is the want of spiritual independence and self-government of the Church, with the wide-spread lethargy which it creates. There is the heritage of unbelief and indifference sent down from the rationalism of the past, and which rests upon the great cities and whole classes of the population. There is the Materialism which, assisted by the failure and downfall of idealist systems of philosophy, perverts physical science in Germany, as elsewhere, into the prophet of annihilation. There is the Pessimism which even courts annihilation rather than Christian regeneration and activity. And there are Socialism and Nihilism, begotten of heavy military burdens and poverty, which grasp with blind violence at a transient Paradise on earth, and refuse to seek a better at the call of the Church, because she has been too often on the side of obstruction and despotism. Still, notwithstanding all these grim and threatening shadows,

the Gospel advances; and the best authorities are agreed that, great as the resistant mass is, the number of living and earnest Christians is larger than at any former day. Who can doubt that it is so? and still more, if this century be contrasted with the last; since, for one earnest and qualified defender of the faith at the date of the Wolfenbüttel Fragments, there are now ten or twenty. May, then, this great sister people, cheered by the memories of the past, and by the co-operation and sympathy of other countries and our own, rightly address itself to a task perhaps as high and difficult as lies in the path of any Christian nation! Whatever of rationalism may remain among them, whatever may be still originated, may they, in the exercise of a wise and just criticism, be led to eliminate and even to turn to good as brightening the records which for a time may seem to be obscured. And for ourselves, while watchful, as we pray that our brethren may be, against all that is evil or doubtful, let us still profit, as we have done, by those great gifts of learning, of speculation, and of profound inward meditation upon the inexhaustible truth of God, repeated in every note from science to sacred song, by which, not less than by the heroic deeds of the Reformation, they have enriched our common inheritance; and may the day come when, in the growing clearness of a faith which has absorbed the mists and clouds of reason, their rationalism and our own shall be looked back upon as only an episode of the past, and as the wandering of a stream which has returned upon its source, henceforth to be like "Siloa's brook, which flowed fast by the oracle of God."

LECTURE VI.

UNBELIEF IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.—STRAUSS, RENAN, MILL.

Tendencies of Nineteenth Century.—Deeper Anti-supernaturalism.—Natural Explanation of Christ and Christianity.—Strauss: first "Leben Jesu," in 1835.—Mythical Theory.—Replies.—Second "Leben Jesu," in 1864.—Relation to Baur and Tübingen School.—Criticism of Amended Theory.—Third and Last Period of Strauss.—Atheism.—Renan.—French Unbelief from Revolutionary Period; "Vie de Jésus," and Succeeding Works.—View of the Gospels.—Failure in Estimating Character and Life of Christ.—Inadequate Account of Success of Christianity and Life of Apostle Paul.—Immoral Attitude towards Doubt within the Church.—John Stuart Mill: Views of Natural Theology.—Possibility of a Revelation.—Sense of the Worth of Christianity and Greatness of Christ.—Lessons from these Studies.—Fluctuation of Unbelief.—Advance of Christianity.—Necessity of Maintaining its Supernatural Character.

Our task in the exhibition of eighteenth century unbelief, and in the setting forth of the contrasts which it presented with the past, or its own internal differences, is now, so far as could be attempted within the required limits, accomplished. But it seems very desirable to make the further development of history the interpreter, and, where needful, corrector of the past century; and, therefore, in this closing Lecture, I shall endeavor, more expressly than has hitherto been done, to cast back the light of more recent times upon the foregoing, and to show to what extent the alleged results of last century have been acquiesced in, or with what new phases of objection or doubt the minds of men have been occupied.

There are, I think, in all, *two* tendencies in the nineteenth century which mark unbelief, as contrasted with the eighteenth. There is, *first*, a tendency to give the anti-supernatural a deeper, a more thorough, and a more radical character; and, *secondly*, there is a tendency, in harmony with this negation, to strive more earnestly to account for Christianity as a phenomenon, and, if possible, with a favorable rather than an unfavorable estimate of its claims, provided only these are denied a super-

natural origin. In regard to the first, it is easy to see from how many quarters it has been strengthened. Philosophy has contributed to this development. So long as philosophy ended in Theism, as in the eighteenth century was generally the case, there was practically room for the Christian belief in the supernatural. But in the great Continental philosophies of the beginning of the century, in which idealism was pushed on to Pantheism, this became impossible; and then, after 1848 in Germany, and even beyond it, materialism went on to atheism, so that a revelation ceased to be admissible. Science also had its share in this denial; for though true science, like true history, will accept any facts that are such, the uniformity of nature was appealed to, both in the name of science and of history, to exclude everything transcending nature, as a revelation necessarily does; and hence the system known as Positivism could not but be sternly anti-supernaturalist, while Agnosticism and Scepticism equally covered any transcendent region with darkness. Nothing then remained but Theism, generally though not necessarily in alliance with a spiritualistic philosophy, to form a basis for Christianity; and even this inference, so far as it was a supernaturalist one, might be cut off by Rationalism, bringing down Christianity to ordinary dimensions, and thus uniting its disciples with the pantheist, the positivist, and atheist, to swell the chorus of assent to the uniformity of law. Nothing but the renewed visibility of Christianity in connection with greatness and progress—a greatness and a progress far beyond the example of the eighteenth century, and such as made it impossible to ignore or to despise it—could have resisted these combined tendencies to anti-supernaturalism, which would otherwise have thrust its dead body aside or quietly walked over it. Hence, as Christianity was still alive and active, there was a necessity—and this is the second feature of our century—of accounting for it on natural principles, and while yielding to its felt power and influence for good, and doing it as much justice as possible consistently with a natural origin, to make that natural origin credible. This problem was also in harmony with the scientific and historic tendency of the age, which would gain a fresh victory if it could succeed in showing that Christianity was one, and it might be the highest, of those religious products which had sprung from human nature, and were due to its mysterious powers alone. This is the religious programme of the nineteenth century as contradistin-

guished from the eighteenth—a work of which we see little trace in English Deism, or in French Illuminism, and only the beginnings in Eichhorn, in Lessing, and, in some grotesque form, in Paulus. Of this labor of unbelief the life of Christ is the central field, and the origin of Christianity as connected with it; and hence I shall pass in review, as distinctive of the nineteenth century, and as illustrating by contrast the foregoing period, the handling of this problem by representative men in each of the countries hitherto reviewed—Strauss, Renan, and John Stuart Mill. The new relations of philosophy and science to the problem—the fundamental one of alleged Revelation—will come out of themselves.

Strauss may be taken as the fullest representative for Germany of the non-believing attempts, in this century, to solve the problem of the life of Christ and the origin of Christianity. In the history of Strauss we discern three periods, and the attitude to Christianity is, in each, different. There is that represented by the first "Leben Jesu," in 1835; there is that represented by the second "Leben Jesu," in 1864; and that represented by "Der alte und der neue Glaube," of 1873. In the first, Christianity is explained through the philosophy of pantheism; in the second, on the ground of a naturalistic theism; and in the third, it is hardly treated as worthy of explanation, but buried in the wreck of a materialistic atheism. The criticism of Strauss thus, in its successive periods, refutes itself, and ends by pulling down the whole temple of religion on its head.

The first issue of the "Leben Jesu," which bore the name, afterwards to be so well known, David Friedrich Strauss, was published in Tübingen in 1835, when its author, then twenty-seven years of age, was only a *repetent* in the University. A native of Ludwigsburg, half-way between Heilbronn and Stuttgart, he had brought to the University of Tübingen a keen and penetrating intellect, and a vast capacity both of learning and of criticism, together with a temperament melancholic and even poetic, which, if cheered and exalted by Christian faith, and regulated by sober judgment, might have made him a great Christian scholar, or even preacher of the Gospel, for which his eminent clearness of style and thorough-going outspokenness of utterance might also have furnished essential help. Unhappily, the faith—if there had been some earlier appearances of it—failed; the balance of judgment was overset; and the clear

and trenchant style, bright with so much knowledge and critical vigor, became only the vehicle of extreme theory and destructive paradox. Schleiermacher and Hegel had but lately disappeared; but Strauss had chosen the philosophy of thought rather than the theology of feeling, and had warmly attached himself to that great system of would-be omniscience which, with all its efforts and promises, and its undoubted impulse to historical research, never could reconcile itself to history. It would be wrong, however, to charge Hegel with the excesses of Strauss, as the latter belonged to the so-called left school of that variously-interpreted philosophy, and as Hegel, whatever the tendency of his system to pantheism, undoubtedly protested against rationalism, and declared that philosophy and supernaturalism agreed in substance, and were only different in form.* In truth, there was nothing in the mythical theory, as Strauss started it, specially akin to the Hegelian philosophy; and it was only the use to which the philosophy was put to repair the ravages of criticism that established any close connection. The introduction prefixed by Strauss to his earliest work shows how much more his view was a development of the preceding rationalism, and how possible it was for it to have come long before, as it lay in the germ in Eichhorn, Gabler, and others. In fact, it did not differ so much from Paulus, as Strauss was eager to show. Paulus, by his naturalistic explanations, reduced the sacred history to ordinary facts; and Strauss, by his mythical theory, showed how ordinary facts had been exalted into a miraculous history. The peculiarity of his scheme lay in applying the principles of mythology to account for the creation of the Gospel narratives. There were the two elements which he allowed—the *Mythus* proper, where history is created purely from an idea, or, if there be a basis of fact, is, by the idea, glorified; and there was the *Sage*, or legend, where, with less influence of the idea, the truth is fantastically dis-

* Hegel, "Geschichte der Philosophie:" "Rationalism is opposed to philosophy, both as to matter and form; it has made matter—it has made heaven—empty, reduced all to finite relations; and as to form, it is opposed to philosophy, for its form is reasoning, unfree reasoning, not conception (Begreifen). Supernaturalism is in religion opposed to Rationalism, but it is allied to philosophy in respect of the true matter, but in form is different; for it is become quite spiritless, wooden, and takes outward authority for its justification. The Scholastics were not Supernaturalists of this type; they knew the dogma of the Church in the way of thought and of conception."—Hegel's *Werke*, vol. xiii. pp. 96–97.

torted or colored. Out of these elements of historical deviation, each of which, however, is perfectly honest in giving itself out as truth (and Strauss even adds a minor contribution of conscious interpolation on the part of the Evangelists, which, however, is not mendacious), he undertakes to build up the existing Gospels, starting from the limited amount of literal history which they contain, or (what is the same thing) to reduce the cloud-capped fabric to its true dimensions.* His rules are chiefly two: to eliminate all that is miraculous or akin to miracle, since he takes for granted that miracle is impossible; and to set aside all that is discordantly related by the Evangelists—a task which is all the easier that he denies the authority of the Synoptists, whom he puts down into the second century, and rejects the Johannine origin of the fourth Gospel. Hence his work is not so much a "Life of Jesus" as a criticism of the Gospel narratives, which he goes through from beginning to end, examining first, under every head, the naturalistic commentary of Paulus, of which the explanations are summarily set aside; and, secondly, the supernaturalist commentary on the Gospels by Olshausen, which had begun to appear in 1830, and in regard to which work, the defence of miracles, and the solution of discords undertaken in it, are pronounced equally unsatisfactory. The result is that there remains either no basis of truth or only a modicum of it, and the procedure of the Evangelists in honestly writing such an unhistorical narrative has to be accounted for. This is done by bringing in the idea of the Old Testament Messiah, which for many centuries had been current, and which filled their minds and hearts. Since this represented him not only as the prophet like Moses, as the son of David, and as the successor of the prophets in sufferings, but also as the worker of signs and wonders, here was the model after which they unconsciously depicted him, while, at the same time, his actual greatness (which Strauss, within limits, admits) was sufficient to explain, and in some sense to necessitate, the exaggeration. Such is the "Leben Jesu," as it first appeared; and now, when Strauss has wrecked the whole Christian edifice, has preserved neither virgin birth nor baptism, nor transfiguration, nor miracle, nor prophecy of any kind, not even of death and rising, and has left Jesus a great moralist and reformer,

* The rules and canons of this procedure are stated in the Introduction to the first "Leben Jesu," pp. 113–124, third edition.

lying in the grave without hope of coming in the clouds of heaven, he consoles himself and his hearers by falling back on the Hegelian philosophy, and interpreting it so as to see at the bottom of this life of Jesus the idea of the identity of God and man, and of the mission of humanity, not in any individual, but in the species, to be the Messiah, to work miracles, to die, rise, and ascend to heaven; while the unparalleled greatness of Jesus as an individual lies in his having seen and taught all this, and having, in his all but perfect life, stood alone and unapproached in history ("*der einzig und unerreicht in der Weltgeschichte steht*").*

This work of Strauss produced unbounded sensation in Germany—not without alarm; although, to use a fine figure of Lessing, instead of the Temple being in flames, it was only the play of an aurora borealis. The ablest theologians in Germany hastened to answer—Neander, Ullmann, Julius Müller, Tholuck, and many more; and for two or three years this controversy absorbed all others. It was shown that, discounting the prejudice against miracles and the abuse of divergencies in the Gospels, the objections were reduced to small dimensions; also, that the dates of the Gospels could not be brought so low as to permit the growth of myth, which, in an historical age, was still more anomalous; and not least, that enough of greatness was not left, in the residual Christ of the Straussian scheme, to have given such an impulse to myth-creation. Strauss defended himself with great alertness and vigor in a series of *Streitschriften;* and it was so far to his credit that, in his second edition, in 1836, overcome by the arguments of Neander in favor of the fourth Gospel, he left its Johannine authorship neutral; though, in the third edition in 1838, he returned to his scepticism. Erelong he failed in an attempt to obtain in the University of Zürich a theological professorship, being resisted by the voice of the people; and having published a "Dogmatik," in which, by the Hegelian method, he brought out of the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel nothing more than the barren results of philosophy, he quitted for twenty years the field of theology proper, and gave himself up to study and writing in connection with the German literature of the Reformation period, of which one fruit appeared in a work on Ulrich von Hutten. In 1862 he surprised the world by a work, in

* "Leben Jesu," vol. ii. p. 779.

which he appeared as the expositor and apologist of Reimarus, though disclaiming his theory of fraud and holding by that of enthusiasm; and in 1864, after Renan had attracted such wide notice in the foregoing year by his "Vie de Jésus," Strauss came out with a popular work, which he had for some time before been laboriously preparing, and which was a complete recast of his old treatise, with the title, "The Life of Jesus Remodelled for the German People."* This work is extremely instructive; but our remarks on it need not be lengthened.

In returning to the field of criticism, Strauss had to adjust his relations to the many laborers who had gone forward in his absence, and chiefly to the Tübingen school, which was commonly supposed to have been originated by his effort. Dr. Baur had disclaimed, as he uniformly did, this relation of dependence; and Strauss, while admitting the great value and originality of Baur's subsequent researches, rather complains that his own part had been underrated.† However, he addresses himself to repair the omission which Baur had charged upon his earlier work in its successive editions, viz., that he had criticised the Gospel history, but neglected to give a critical account of the Gospels.‡ Accordingly, about a hundred pages in his work are devoted to this subject; and in these the views of Baur and his successors are substantially adopted. Baur, as is well known, did not construct his scheme of the origin of the Gospels upon a mythical principle, but upon what has been called one of tendency (*Tendenz*). To him, the key to the apostolic and post-apostolic age is the conflict between two parties in the early Church, the Petrine or Jewish, and the Pauline or Gentile. He has here a *vera causa*, or element of undoubted fact, which Strauss cannot be said to have had in his mythical impulse; but Baur has enormously exaggerated both it and its influence; and as this appears elsewhere, so here; for, according to him, whatever oral and earlier written Gospels may have existed, the Gospels in their present shape were not produced till the conflict between the two great parties was cooled down, and we have, even after their origin, the marks of still further retouching and adjustment from time to time, under the influence of one or other of these tendencies.

* The German title is "Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet." Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1864.

† Second "Leben Jesu," p. 97.

‡ Ibid., p. 98. See also Appendix, Note K.

It is not necessary to state further Baur's general position, which throws all the Gospels and the Acts into the second century. Strauss not only accepts this view, but carries it as far as Schwegler had done, whom he thus quotes: "At every step," says Schwegler, strikingly, "that theological consciousness took in advance there was a fresh correction of the Gospels: what was antiquated and objectionable was expunged; what was suitable to the age was introduced; withal, many a watchword of progress was interpolated; and thus we see the Church engaged in a constant production of Gospel discourses and sayings, till this Gospel reform reached a period with the exclusive recognition of our Synoptists and the fixation of the Catholic Church."* However, Strauss, in his anxiety to find time for his mythical development, both in its first and second form, has sinned against history. The late date of the Gospels is more and more abandoned, even by adherents of the Tübingen school; and it cannot be understood how, if documents were publicly recognized and used, they could ever have been thus changed, any more than the prayer-books or hymn-books of a modern church; nor, on the other hand, how, if they were only private, they could ever, all at once, have burst upon us in full public use and recognition. Another fatal result of this more detailed theory of the Gospels is the exclusion of the mythical principle. There is no longer unconsciousness, to the extent at first claimed. If Luke could leave out the benediction of Peter as the Rock in order not to offend the Gentiles, and if Mark could allow the Gentiles as dogs to be fed, but only after the Jews, so as to please both, we have a mortal stab given not only to the ordinary view of their inspiration, but to the mythical theory of their unconsciousness. We are dragged down into a region which is nearer fabrication than colorless fiction; and if we could believe this, the problem of the Gospels would soon be dismissed.†

In his recast Strauss endeavors to meet another long-standing objection, that he had not separated the historical from the mythical elements in the life of Jesus; and hence one part of his work gives the real history, the other the adventitious. He complains much of the darkness of this topic; and repre-

* Second "Leben Jesu," p. 118.

† These liberties of Luke and Mark, according to Strauss, which, however, are only specimens of others, are stated in second "Leben Jesu," pp. 122, 134.

sents Christ as so much less known than Socrates, and so disguised by his own followers, that, had he returned, by the fall of Jerusalem, he would not have known his own image.* He thinks himself, however, warranted to say that Jesus was a greater than Socrates, a pre-eminent moralist and reformer, who united Hebrew sanctity with Greek geniality, realized with original force the fatherhood of God, and founded human virtue on this model, thus giving to mercy, tenderness, and self-sacrifice their long-neglected place and ascendency. Strauss does not allow that there was any defect in Christ's moral teaching (in regard to which he accepts the Sermon on the Mount and some of the parables), so far as the individual is concerned;† but sees a deficiency in regard to the state, and in regard to industry and art, and something of too ascetic a character. There has dropped away the whole Hegelianism of his earlier work; and he speaks almost as if himself a theist; for he judges the morality of Jesus as drawing its excellence from being based on the fatherhood of God;‡ though he no longer holds that Jesus stands alone amid the possibilities of the future.§ As to the public career of Jesus, he grants that he believed the Jewish Scriptures to predict the founder of a universal religion of spiritual worship and charity, under the name of Messiah; applied that character to himself; formed himself on such delineations of it as brought out suffering and sacrifice, *e. g.*, the 53d of Isaiah; predicted his own death, and may have taught it to be a ransom for many, in harmony with which he may have instituted the Last Supper.‖ In the work of thus spiritualizing the Jewish ideas of a Messiah, and abolishing the Jewish national religion and ceremonial law, he met his end, little being known of it save that he was betrayed by a disciple, crucified by the Roman power at the instance of the Jews (being at Jerusalem for the first time), and died, expect-

* Second "Leben Jesu," p. 623.

† "Everything is fully developed that relates to the love of God and our neighbor, to purity of heart and life in the individual."—*Second "Leben Jesu,"* p. 626.

‡ Second "Leben Jesu," pp. 206–207. § Ibid., p. 627.

‖ "Deeply meditating upon his approaching death, he might at the same time, from the point of view of a sacrifice, regard his blood as the seal of a new covenant between God and man, and in order to give the society he proposed to found a living centre, he might have ordained this giving out of bread and wine as a festival to be repeated."—*Second "Leben Jesu,"* p. 282.

ing through enthusiasm to come again with the clouds of heaven, to set up a kingdom, and judge the quick and dead.* The resurrection, and all the miracles, are, as before, rejected as unhistorical.

Out of these historic materials, with the added help of Messianic prophecy, Old Testament type, and current tradition, Strauss, in much the largest part of his work, gives the genesis of the mythical portion of the life of Jesus. It is weary labor, but he holds on to it, all through the host of myths that gather around the childhood, ministry, and last scenes. As David, whom the Messiah was bound to resemble, was anointed by Samuel, so Jesus was baptized by John, though a large part of his connection with the Baptist is mythical.† As Moses fed the people with manna, so Jesus had to feed them in the wilderness.‡ As the Messiah was not to be left, according to Psalm xvi. 10, in Sheol, so Jesus must rise from the dead.§ These are examples of nearly three hundred pages of mythical construction, till the mind is overpowered with wonder, and led to ask, What great reality created all this? Is the Jesus of Strauss so stupendous a personality as to have cast so much vaster a radiance far and wide than Socrates? Was the climate so intensely hot, and the soil so rich, as to have forced on all this tropical vegetation, where the graft or the parasite is so much more than the tree?

> "Nec longum tempus et ingens
> Exiit ad cœlum ramis felicibus arbos
> Miraturque novas frondes et non sua poma."‖

To these questions, on the doctrine of the uniformity of nature, there can be no reply. The believers in Jesus, who believed so excessively beyond facts, do not belong to the ordinary or even extraordinary course of experience. If the miracles are myths,

* Strauss does not ascribe this delusion to Jesus with absolute certainty; but is moved to regard it, from the consent of the Evangelists and other circumstances, as highly probable; and he says: "To see exalted gifts of mind and heart blended with a dash (*dosis*) of enthusiasm, is no uncommon phenomenon; and of the great men of history it may be roundly affirmed, that none of them has been quite free from enthusiasm" (*Schwärmerei*).—*Second* "*Leben Jesu*," p. 237.

† "Second Leben Jesu," pp. 340–347.

‡ Strauss also mingles here, with the imitation of Moses, a reference to the Lord's Supper.—Ibid., pp. 496–506.

§ Ibid., pp, 305–306. ‖ Virgil, Georg. II., pp. 80–82.

the myths are miracles; and thus the supernatural, or *subternatural*, returns upon us; and another theory, mythical or other, will be required to reduce this phenomenon in the Christian Church to the sobriety of history. Besides, why was so unexampled an impression so transient? The greatest of moralists compels falsification, conscious or unconscious. The followers of Jesus walk most of all in darkness. The incredible element of the fourth Gospel—which Strauss had exclaimed against, in the case of the worst of scholars—is here true also of the best: "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Nay, the stumbling-block of Deism returns in this very theory upon itself: "God has spoken; why is not the world convinced?"

There is, let it be added, a tone of sadness and disappointment in Strauss's second period. His work is an appeal from theologians—not only orthodox, but less orthodox, like Ewald and Schenkel, to the German people. It has, however, made small impression. The German people may be still in large masses rationalized; but they will never accept a theory like the mythical.*

The *third* and last period of Strauss is marked by the publication of his "Old and New Faith," in 1873.† This is an energetic denial, *first*, that it is possible now to be Christians; and, *secondly*, that it is possible to have any religion whatever. Under the first head very little is said that is new; but what is said only marks a further degradation in the view of Christ. He is still allowed to be a great teacher; but there is a prevailing tendency to abate his praise. The defects charged against his morality are multiplied and exaggerated; the virtues, formerly allowed to have been peculiar, are distributed also among Talmudists, Stoics, and Buddhists. His example is less exalted. He may have been surprised by his own death; and his exclamation on the cross may have been one of despair; at least, a being whose history is so doubtful, and whose exaggerated view of the future so distorts the present, cannot properly be an example.‡ The cross is an emblem of humanity in its weakness

* See Appendix, Note L.

† The title in German is "Der alte und der neue Glaube; ein Bekenntniss von David F. Strauss."

‡ Ibid., pp. 77–78. Strauss here comes over to Celsus and Reimarus; but he does the orthodox the justice to admit that their doctrine of Christ's humiliation here saves His character.

—"the most one-sided and rude embodiment of Christian world-renunciation and passivity."* Strauss even lowers himself so far as to speak of the success of a doctrine of the resurrection, due to a groundless enthusiasm, as "world-historical humbug" (*ein welt-historischer Humbug*).† To this Christianity has little to reply. If so degrading a word fitly marks a power of credulity that has overcome in the past centuries such a strength of critical reason as Strauss is an example of, *magna est veritas* is hardly a motto for the future, and the stone is not only on the grave of Christ, but of humanity.

Under the *second* head, he passes in review the arguments for the Being of God and for Immortality, and finds them insufficient. Little is here original, and not a little is visibly weak. That a personal God cannot be absolute is mere assertion; and to appeal to the instinctive acts of the lower animals, as a conclusive argument against design, which is almost all that he does in regard to the design argument, is not worthy of an admirer of Kant. But with all reason and goodness are not banished out of the universe, for they are allowed to shine through its laws; and yet there can be no God and no religion.‡ In regard to immortality he has always held the same dreary language, but it is put more rudely. The hope of it is mere *grossprecherei* (boastfulness). The greatest genius (even a Goethe) is used up at fourscore; and his desire of life to come was only the weakness of age. Besides, the materialism to which Strauss at length accedes forbids it, and astronomy has cut off any separate state, where man, along with God and angels, may renew his existence.§

It is a novelty that Strauss, in this work, connects his negative theology with recent science. In a long discussion he explains and adopts the views of Lamarck and Darwin, and their German followers, and connects them with parallel astronomical and geological theories. But whatever the bearing of these positions on Christian Theism (and of that this is not the place to speak), Strauss seems evidently mistaken in supposing them necessarily destructive of universal Theism, for that might conceivably work by the path of evolution, as well as of specific creation. Here, also, he is betrayed into great rashness, for the *Bathybius* to which he appeals, as marking the transition from

* "Der alte und der neue Glaube," p. 93.
† Ibid., p. 73.
‡ Ibid., p. 143.
§ Ibid., pp. 129–134.

the inorganic to the organic world, has already disappeared; and Virchow, one of his authorities, has pronounced against the ape-descent theory.*

In conclusion, he tries to provide a kind of moral rule for humanity thus left without God and without hope of the future. This he finds, somewhat like the Stoics, in living according to nature, which defines both our duty to ourselves and to others. How little way, however, this generality would lead, Strauss has shown by conceding the perpetuity of war, by loosening the Christian doctrine of divorce, and by needing, in a conservative sense, to protest against socialism and wild democracy, which, founding on alleged conformity to nature, reach destructive results.† With the Christian light and influence withdrawn, humanity would soon receive a narrower acceptation; and a philanthropy which is not even theophilanthropy would write small the only half of the Decalogue which it retained. It is a far from unclouded prospect that is before the human race; for Strauss frankly admits that, as a consequence of changes in the eternal and infinite All, this planet, with all its works and all its inhabitants, even though these should be developed for a time into beings higher than human, must one day utterly vanish, and leave no trace for succeeding memory. But still he holds that it will have served its purpose; and the universe, by development on some other side, be as rich as ever. With these views, and in the practical ordering of our brief existence, according to the rule already given, he holds that we may console ourselves in the use of poetry and music, of the authors of which he gives sketches, written expressly for this work (Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Bach, Handel, Glück, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven), and may dispense, however, in some respects, sorrowfully, with the Christian consolations of Atonement, Providence, and Immortality.

Such is the mournful end of a mournful career, not pessimism avowedly, for Strauss argues against Schopenhauer and his followers, but pessimism striving to speak like optimism, and yet sad at heart. We can measure here the whole steep that sinks down from Herbert's Five Principles to the negation of them all, save only the wreck of a virtue that has ceased to be worship; and we learn (alas! that it should have been in

* "Der alte und der neue Glaube," pp. 174–209.
† Ibid., pp. 252–271.

a man so gifted!) that, with the denial of Jesus and the Resurrection, God not only remains unknown, but the very altar that preserves His name is overturned!

In passing from Strauss to Renan, and in endeavoring to estimate the position of the latter, it is not necessary to go into lengthened discussion, as Renan, after Strauss, is comparatively easy to understand, and as he does not occupy nearly so considerable a place of history. He is a follower of Strauss; with differences, partly due to nationality and partly to personal character; but neither will he, in turn, found any school or give impulsion of a lasting nature.

When we think of Ernest Renan as born in 1823 in Brittany, one of the most Romish parts of France, and as a candidate for the Catholic ministry studying in connection with the Seminary of St. Sulpice, in Paris, for five years, till, a year or two before the fall of the Orleans dynasty, he estranged himself from the Church and gave himself up to Oriental languages, we have something like a repetition of the career of Strauss, who was about fifteen years older. What immense experiences had France passed through since the establishment of the Concordat in 1802! Not to mention the downfall of Napoleon and the expulsion of the elder Bourbons, the continued march of science, and the career of the Scoto-Gallican school of philosophy, founded by Royer-Collard, and adorned by Cousin and Jouffroy, there was in the world of religion the revival of Catholicism, with its more ultramontane type including the majority, and its more liberal minority headed by men like Lacordaire and Dupanloup; and on the Protestant side, a more evangelical party, connected largely with Switzerland, and led by the noble Alexandre Vinet, and a more rationalistic, looking more to Germany and influenced from Strasburg by Reuss, Colani, and others. In his own church, Renan, having rejected its doctrines, could find no career; and though among the rationalized Protestants he might have been at home, there is no evidence of his having ever thought of such a position. Some time afterwards a well-known Protestant, Scherer, threw himself out of all Church connection into literature; and this was the course of Renan, who, erelong, became distinguished by his Shemitic studies, which followed German models, and in 1856 was made a member of the Institute. Sent in 1859 to conduct Phœnician researches, his exploration of the Holy Land became to him, as he afterwards said, a fifth gospel, and

he returned to write the "Vie de Jésus," which was published in 1863, and to follow it up with the five volumes more, under the general title "Histoire des Origines du Christianisme." These last volumes bear on the period after the Resurrection: on St. Paul; on the Neronian persecution; on the formation of the Gospels by the end of the first century; and on the Church in the first part of the second. The whole work is to come down to about 160, when Christianity is fully developed and established. This treatise is for Renan a substitute for lectures in the chair of Hebrew in the College of France, to which he was appointed after his return from Palestine; but in entering upon which his first utterances were so offensive that he was immediately condemned to silence. Of this series the "Vie de Jésus" is by much the most rhetorical and paradoxical; the rest, though not without the same faults, fall more into the track of ordinary Church history. The "Vie de Jésus," which came out in 1863, made an unexampled sensation; ran in some twelve months to thirteen editions, and was circulated, it is believed, to the number of more than 50,000 copies. It has now subsided into less importance than the "Leben Jesu" of Strauss, and of the succeeding volumes I am not aware that one has reached a second edition.* Still, as the representative of a leading school on the Continent, this writer deserves notice; and I shall endeavor briefly to estimate his position, under these heads—his view of the Gospels and other New Testament writings; his estimate of the Saviour's character and life; his conception of the success of Christianity, and specially of the labors of the Apostle Paul; and his idea of the duty of modern unbelief in relation to the Christian Church.

1. The view of Renan in regard to the Gospels and New Testament generally is greatly more conservative than that of Strauss, and falls in with the general tendency even of recent negative critics, to carry up the date of New Testament writings. In the introductions to his successive volumes these questions are handled, and in his last but one, which came out in 1877, the origin of the Gospels is specially considered. There

* These facts in regard to M. Renan are derived from so many sources that they can hardly be enumerated. Some of them are from information personally obtained in France and elsewhere.

was an Aramaic Gospel, which we only very imperfectly know, drawn up among the Jerusalem Christians that had escaped beyond Jordan, some time about the year 75. Then, not long after, follows Mark (in Greek), by the author to whom the Church has usually ascribed it, the nephew and interpreter of Peter, whose apostolic testimony is preserved in it. Then comes, as a recast of Mark, the Gospel commonly called of Matthew (to whom, however, for slight reasons, Renan denies it), adding to Mark the discourses and other materials, and written some time before 95. Luke is next, by one whom nothing forbids us to regard as the companion of Paul, and author of the Acts, who writes somewhere about 95.* In regard to the fourth Gospel, Renan has wavered, believing it to be from the school, if not from the hand of the Apostle, and drawing from it in his first work decisive indications as to fact, though distrusting its discourses; then, in deference to the severe reproaches of Strauss, in the thirteenth edition of his "Vie de Jésus," formally valuing it less; but in his "Évangiles" refusing to give in to the extreme scepticism of Scholten and Keim, who deny the Apostle's residence in Asia Minor, and estimating it, though not as highly as before, still as preserving important traditions peculiar to itself.† These sources, which he himself admits, cut away the ground of Renan's first work—his "Vie de Jésus." If two companions of Peter and Paul wrote the life of Jesus—Mark, a Jerusalem Christian, and Luke, who was with Paul for two years at Cæsarea, a quarter of a century after the crucifixion—it can only be the recoil from the miraculous that refuses their testimony. So of the Acts, in regard to

* For an Aramaic Gospel, with its date, see "Les Évangiles," p. 97; for Mark, see pp. 113–125; for the canonical Matthew, pp. 214, 215. In regard to this Gospel, Renan indulges in his usual coloring: "It is the most important book of Christianity, the most important book that ever was written," pp. 212, 213. For Luke, see pp. 251–254.

† This is Renan's last utterance on the question ("Les Évangiles," pp. 428, 429): "We now think it more probable that no part of the Gospel which bears the name of John was written either by him or by any of his disciples in his lifetime. But we persist in believing that John had a manner of his own of repeating to himself the life of Jesus—a manner very different from that of the original narratives of Batanea—in some respects superior—and where, in particular, the parts of the life of Jesus that were passed in Jerusalem were given with most detail." For the rejection of Renan of the scepticism of those who deny the Apostle's residence in Asia Minor, he falls back on the testimony of Irenæus, who would otherwise be made a liar (p. 425, note 2).

which Renan speaks of the last half, as giving us, with the uncontested Epistles of Paul, the only real history in the whole period.* What, then, but aversion to the supernatural makes him complain of the darkness of the first half of the Acts, since a good eye-witness cannot be a bad collector of testimonies? Of Paul, Renan accepts, with the most extreme sceptics, Romans, First and Second Corinthians, and Galatians; then, with confidence, First and Second Thessalonians and Philippians; with hesitation, Colossians and Philemon; with more hesitation, Ephesians; and only denies to Paul the Pastoral Epistles; Hebrews being probably the work of Barnabas, and written before the fall of Jerusalem.† Of the Catholic Epistles, he only distinctly sets aside one, Second Peter; holding that First, Second, and Third John proceed from the disciples of the Apostle, and reflect his ideas, and conceding with the Tübingen school, though not certainly, the Apocalypse to John, as a representative of extreme Judaism, but also of antagonism to Heathenism, as incarnated in the person of Nero, the Antichrist, after whose downfall it was written, in 69.‡ Without opposing, which is here needless, any of these data of Renan, it is easy to see that, taken as a whole, they give us all that is most formidable in criticism, strictly so called, as bearing against the truth and divine substance of the New Testament, and reduce the essential controversy to a question not as to uncertain age, but at most uncertain interpretation. How vast the difference from the position of Strauss! "Sure traces that our first three Gospels existed in their present form meet us for the first time about the middle of the second century."§

2. We have now to speak of Renan's estimate of the character and life of Jesus; and this is the point where, by general

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* "The last pages of the Acts are the only completely historical pages we have on the origin of Christianity" ("Apôtres," Introduction, p. xxvii.). "It is clear that where the Acts and the Epistles are in discord, the preference is always to be given to the Epistles, texts of an absolute authenticity, older, of complete sincerity and without legends" ("Apôtres," Introduction, p. xxix.).

† For Hebrews, see "L'Antechrist," Introduction, pp. xiii.–xvii.

‡ For First Peter, James, and Jude, see "L'Antechrist," Introduction, pp. vi.–xiii. For First, Second, and Third John, as being from the same author with the Fourth Gospel, see "L'Eglise Chrétienne," pp. 47–62. For the Apocalypse, as probably Johannine, and certainly of so early a date, see "L'Antechrist," Introduction, pp. xxi.–xlii.

§ Strauss, second "Leben Jesu," p. 61.

consent, he has made the greatest failure. On the one hand, his praises of Jesus as an incomparable teacher and example are pitched in a higher key than those of Strauss, even in his Hegelian period; but motives and actions are ascribed to him which Strauss constantly holds him incapable of, and which destroy all moral unity. "Jesus is the individual who has made his species take the greatest step towards the Divine."* Yet he is supposed capable of conspiring, with Lazarus and his sisters, to work the collusive miracle of a resurrection; and though this needed to be withdrawn, enough was retained in later editions to incriminate these friends; and Jesus himself having left the charming scenes of Galilee, where already he had tended to become an excited millenary enthusiast, at length in Jerusalem "loses the limpidity of his conscience," and having committed himself to a life-and-death conflict with the authorities, in which he would have been compelled to meet them with questionable miracles as his weapons, is only extricated from his false position by death.† There is here a deep and radical contradiction; and Renan sinks all the lower, by supposing this to be the divine plan of the universe, that great spirits, by partaking the world's evil, help on its redemption. "When we have done as much with our scruples as they by their lies (*mensonges*), we shall have the right to be hard upon them."‡ This sad mixture passes over to the disciples, for the female friends of Jesus may have removed the body, and yet, through the enthusiasm of love, have believed in the resurrection. Renan refers with approval to the "excellent critical observations" of Celsus on the hallucination of Mary Magdalene, and similar self-deceivers; and thus the unbelief of the nineteenth century joins hands with that of the second.§

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* "Vie de Jésus," p. 457, eleventh edition.

† "Sa conscience par faute des hommes, et non par la sienne, avait perdu quelque chose de sa limpidité primordiale" ("Vie de Jésus," p. 360; see also p. 363). I cannot give the terms in which, in the first edition, Jesus was charged with collusion in the professed raising of Lazarus, as the passage was immediately suppressed.

‡ "Vie de Jésus," p. 253.

§ For the complicity of Mary Magdalene or other female friends in the removal of the body, see "Apôtres," pp. 42–43. The "excellent critical observations" of Celsus (Orig. ii. 55) consist of an appeal to the pious frauds of Pythagoras, Orpheus, and Hercules, and of questions like these: "Can it be credited that he who did not keep himself alive, rose from the dead, and showed the marks of his punishment and pierced hands?

3. When we come to the success of Christianity, and especially in connection with the labors of the Apostle Paul, we find, notwithstanding interesting researches and elucidations in regard to his external history, the same darkness and chaos of a moral and spiritual nature. For his conversion there is needed, with inward remorse, a lightning flash, or a sun-stroke, ophthalmia, and a supposed vision of Jesus.* But let all be granted, and let the Apostle be started in full career, how was he to convert the world? Renan calls special attention, in his "Vie de Jésus," to the millenary expectations of Jesus, which Paul inherits. How were these to be received by men beyond the Jewish circle, who had no faith in a Messiah, or divine kingdom, and who would hardly take the word of a wandering Jewish missionary for expectations which required the sacrifice of every earthly hope? Paul, also, according to Renan, believed that he wrought miracles—for this is attested by 2 Cor. xii. 12; but these had no reality, and hence would have been a two-edged weapon to play with. There could hardly be a converting power in his eloquence; for Renan says that, without the Gospels, "the Epistles of Paul alone would never have acquired a hundred converts for Jesus."† The Gospels did not then exist; and, besides, Paul's Epistles were by some at least judged more weighty than his spoken words. Renan speaks of Paul at Athens as an iconoclastic Jew, who "took these incomparable images for idols;" but where was the hammer to be found by which an enthusiast thus blind to ancient and modern art, "an ugly little Jew," was to shatter all in pieces? The victory of Christianity hangs in the air. There is nothing divine, and nothing visibly human, to produce it. The answer of Lessing, in his best mood, is here the only rational one, that the men who thus prevailed must have had a true resurrection behind them. The fall of Paganism, without it, is the greater miracle. Renan, though otherwise emancipated from the Tübingen formalism, here greatly aggravates his own difficulties by introducing a radical schism into the growing church, and tying up the hands of Paul, by discord not only with Judaizers,

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Who said this? An excited woman, as you say, or some one else of the same tribe of magicians, either dreaming, according to their wont, or misled, through inclination, as has happened to myriads, by a disordered fancy; or, what is more likely, wishing to impress others by such prodigies, and by a falsehood of this kind give a handle to other strollers.

* "Les Apôtres," pp. 181–182. † "Les Évangiles," p. 100.

but with the greatest Jewish apostles. There is nothing more incredible in all history than that the churches in Asia Minor, which Paul had founded, should have speedily lost sight of his name, under the dominant influence of John; and that, indeed, in the second century he should have been almost forgotten, for then his resurrection in the third, fourth, and fifth, as the founder of Christian theology, would be a marvel *sui generis*.* Renan is right in censuring those extreme theorists, abroad and at home, who rank Paul as the true founder of Christianity; but how, with such data as are alone allowed, not to speak of the sinister features which are inserted into the moral portrait, the Apostle could play the great and decisive part which he was called on to do in the victory of the Gospel, is inconceivable.

4. It only remains to say a word on Renan's attitude towards the Christian Church as a public institution. He is far indeed from wishing to play over again the part of Voltaire, or, like Strauss, to wash his hands of all Christian profession and organization. On the contrary, he everywhere proclaims religion to be necessary; and, while asking room for such a career of anti-dogmatic criticism as his own, declares that, "let rationalism wish as it may to govern the world without regard to the religious wants of the soul, the experience of the French Revolution is at hand to teach the consequences of such an error."† He even goes so far as to exhort the French clergy who may be troubled with sceptical doubts still to remain in the bosom of the Church, and apostrophizes the tombs of such clerical doubters around their village churches that now conceal such "poetic reserves and angelic silences."‡ The true Christian conscience will here dictate a very different lesson, and will lament to add another name to the long history of "accommodation" by which unbelief has been marked. The more decisive spirit of Strauss, in his "Halben und Ganzen" ("Half-Men and Whole"), and in his later career, must here commend itself to the unsophisticated mind of every creed; and it is to be hoped, for every interest, that it will rule the relations of the future.

When we return to England, where our review of the eighteenth century began, we find no one who corresponds, as a representative of the present century, to Strauss and Renan.

* "St. Paul," p. 565. † "Les Apôtres," p. lxiv. ‡ Ibid., p. xlii.

We have no name, associated with the side of negation, holding so prominent a place, and exerting so much of a leading influence. We have none, especially, who has taken up with so much earnestness the criticism of the life of Jesus, or who has attempted to solve, on natural principles, the origin of Christianity. But, as it is desirable to measure English results, as far as practicable, against those of the Continent, and to estimate the light which is thus cast upon the past, I have selected Mr. John Stuart Mill as the writer who will be generally allowed to have come nearest being a typical instance, and who, if differing not a little from both Strauss and Renan, yet so far sums up for England the parallel development of thought, and gives it deliberate expression. This can only be said of Mr. Mill's posthumous works, and especially of his three essays, "Nature," "Utility of Religion," and "Theism," which, however, do not quite agree among themselves, while the last and most important was not prepared for publication like the others. However, as Mr. Mill seems to have regarded these essays as fundamentally consistent; and as that on Theism, more distinctly than any other, strikes into the line of questions discussed by Strauss and Renan, and on which Mr. Mill's readers, more than on any other, had long desired from him some definite utterance, I shall make no apology for considering it with the others, and relative passages in Mr. Mill's other publications, as furnishing, however imperfectly, an English equivalent to these Continental testimonies. I shall notice Mr. Mill's position under these heads—his Natural Religion; his view of the possibility of Revelation; and his estimate of the character of Christ, and of the Origin and Worth of Christianity. On these subjects it may be remarked that Mr. Mill's relation to Comte hardly interferes with his claim to be considered an English representative—a rank more seriously interfered with by the abatement of influence by which Mr. Mill's writings are already beginning to be affected.

1. Mr. Mill's views of Natural Theology are of so peculiar a type that they hardly find any example in history. Bayle might be regarded as the likest; but Mr. Mill disclaims Manichæanism, holding that the marks of evil design are limited and obscure, and that evil appears more as a fetter and a limitation. His essay on "Nature" strongly brings out the evil in the form of suffering, which Nature, as apart from man, inflicts, and also

in man the defect or worse in moral tendency, which man himself has to overcome. This picture is so dark that it might almost be regarded as an abandonment of any wreck of Theism. The exaggeration of evil in nature is carried beyond the non-theistic position of Strauss, who regards the universe as still somehow rational and good. Mr. Mill even leaves out of account, as due to this higher Power, the tendencies in man to rise above the sensuous and non-moral dispositions with which alone, as from a supposed author, he is credited, and to work under a system of moral government such as theists connect with a Creator, and regard, with all its present defects, as the reflection of his moral image. It might seem, therefore, as if Mr. Mill, in the essay on "Nature," and in that on the "Utility of Religion," had finally broken with Theism; more especially as in the latter essay he gives up the doctrine of immortality as shadowy in its evidence and needless in its influence, it being "not only possible but probable that in a higher, and above all a happier condition of human life, not annihilation but immortality may be the burdensome idea; and that human nature, though pleased with the present, and by no means impatient to quit it, would find comfort and not sadness in the thought that it is not chained through eternity to a conscious existence, which it cannot be assured that it will always wish to preserve."* It might, therefore, almost have seemed as if Mr. Mill, in these two Essays, regarded his last word as spoken, and was only anxious to provide, in what he calls the "Religion of Humanity," a substitute for a time-honored belief that had turned out to be neither true nor useful. It is truly wonderful how such a mind could ever have regarded that idealized view of the welfare of mankind as a whole, which he calls the Religion of Humanity, as adequate to take the place and do the work of religion. He does not, indeed, run into the puerilities and extravagances of Comte himself, and of a portion of his English followers, in providing a ritual or calendar, and other commemorations of humanity, which are henceforth to take the place of divine worship; but that Mr. Mill should have hoped to clothe a moral or philosophical Utilitarianism — or universal sympathetic benevolence — with the authority of a religion, as he professes to be able to do; to give it an equal sway over public opinion; above all,

* "Three Essays," p. 122.

to introduce it into education, where, unlike the idea of a Father in heaven, of heaven itself, and of a Saviour who has come down from heaven, and who loves and blesses children, the conception of humanity in the abstract could not, till late, be grasped, and could never be made to appeal by allegory or parable to the feelings—is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of speculation.

As if, however, Mr. Mill desired to relieve somewhat the helplessness of this scheme, and to borrow more largely from religious hope, we find that in his essay on "Theism," written ten or twelve years after the foregoing, and finished not long before his death, he makes considerable concessions in the direction of ordinary views. He does not grant, indeed, the scientific validity of any Theistic argument but that from design, but allows that "in the present state of our knowledge the adaptations in nature afford a large balance of probability in favor of creation by intelligence."* He considers, also, "that the power, if not the intelligence, must be so far superior to that of man as to surpass all human estimate."† The attributes of God in any sense rising to infinity he rejects; but still he claims to hold as much as Leibnitz, or many believers in God, who, if they only knew their own minds, have virtually held him to be limited; and he distinctly excludes the Manichæan idea. He goes farther, also, towards immortality, not allowing a single natural argument in its favor, but equally excluding every argument against it, and especially that of the materialist from the association of thought with what is called matter. There is thus a larger residuum of Natural Theology, and of hope, if not of knowledge, in connection with it in Mill than in Strauss, or, for aught that appears, in Renan; and it is so far satisfactory to find in England so much of the old recoil from speculative atheism.

2. We have now to look at Mr. Mill's views as to the Possibility of Revelation. This Mr. Mill fully grants, as far as the existence of a Being capable of making a revelation is concerned. He is beyond the atheist or pantheist error, which rigidly excludes it. He even regards his position as more favorable than that of Butler, who, as we have seen, though victorious over the Deists, still allowed himself, according to Mr.

* "Three Essays," p. 174. † Ibid., p. 176.

Mill, to be involved in the same error with them in holding an all-perfect Creator and Ruler. Mr. Mill looks on himself as cutting away the whole of the Deistic difficulties—as to a revelation being useless, or as to it accomplishing less than it might have been expected to do.* The whole question to him is simply one of evidence, and to this he proceeds. Internal evidence he regards as only negative; that is, its badness can exclude a false revelation, but its goodness cannot authenticate a true, and for this reason, that there is no truth that the human mind can appreciate but it could also have originated.† But surely this, though a common, is a hard saying; for may not the transcendent morality of Jesus, taken in connection with his outward circumstances, be an appreciable mark of the supernatural—not to mention the whole plan of the Bible as bearing on redemption—in its unity, grandeur of style, and other qualities? We are then thrown back on external facts; and it is something to find that Mr. Mill regards these as available evidence of a revelation. He also admits that a miracle may be discernible by the human faculties, as, for example, an act of creation.‡ He then, however, proceeds to perplex himself by the difficulty of Hume as to testimony; and here he also tries to make the point good, that the Bible miracles are not of the flagrant character sufficient to convince eye-witnesses, but may be explicable by natural law yet undiscovered. But, first, with regard to testimony, Mr. Mill, like Hume himself, seems to err in bringing in testimony, while granting the validity of a miracle at first hand. There is nothing believable on sense which is not believable on testimony; and the discernibleness of a miracle is the same in both cases, the objection of some possible undiscovered law applying to both. Mr. Mill therefore cuts away his own ground in appealing to recent science as establishing the uniformity of law, for this should have excluded the concession he makes as to the discernibleness of creation. And, secondly, with regard to the Bible miracles, as reported, being obscure and not flagrant, this surely is untrue; for many of them, *if the appearances actually happened*, as Strauss has felt, set at defiance every naturalist explanation. He then inquires whether unbelief in God makes any difference as to the credibility of miracles, and holds (as we saw in a former Lecture) that it does;

* "Three Essays," pp. 214–215. † Ibid., p. 216.
‡ Ibid., pp. 217–218.

though here we may remark, as is acutely urged by Mr. Mozley as a *reductio ad absurdum* of Hume's objection to testimony, that, if admitted at all, it excludes faith on the part of a Theist as much as of any other hearer. Mr. Mill, then, would grant more faith to a Theist in the abstract; but, considering that the uniform course of nature is God's will, he thus comes back to the same negative result as from the teachings of science.* But really it is not science that shuts the door, but presupposition; nor is it fair, in this case, to complain of imperfect testimony; for, had it been any better, it does not seem that it could have logically prevailed against such strong assertion as to science; and, besides, better testimony could not have been had than that of the Apostle Paul, not merely to other miracles, but to his own, as in 2 Cor. xii. 12, a passage which Mr. Mill has hardly attended to in denying that the Apostle directly attested any miracle but that of his own conversion.† Still, though Mr. Mill does not allow the Scripture miracles to be sufficiently attested, and refuses even the claim of the Saviour, on his own testimony, to be supernaturally sealed by his works, he leaves this open as something which, though not proved, may still be hoped for, especially when we think of the gift, "extremely precious," which has come to us through him; and thus his ultimate scheme has not the closed-up and rigorously anti-supernaturalist aspect which we have found in the Continental theories.

3. We have, lastly, to look at Mr. Mill's estimate of the origin of Christianity, of its worth, and especially of the character of Christ. This field is much less gone into than by Strauss and Renan; but Mr. Mill also travels in it; and though there be much that to Christian minds is not only unsatisfactory but painful, there is also much that is striking and interesting. As already seen, it can only be hoped, not scientifically believed, that Jesus is a divine messenger, that the government of God is what he proclaims it to be, and that the immortality held out in his teaching is really a divine promise. So

* "Three Essays," pp. 232–234.

† Ibid., p. 239, note: "St. Paul, the only known exception to the ignorance and want of education of the first generation of Christians, attests no miracle but that of his own conversion, which, of all the miracles of the New Testament, is the one which admits of the easiest explanation from natural causes."

far as strict reasoning goes, we know nothing more of the origin of Christianity than that God "made provision in the scheme of creation for its arising at the appointed time by natural development;"* but it is our wisdom so to cultivate the faculties of hope and imagination in harmony with exact evidence as to cherish the idea that there may be truth in the supernatural elements of its history. Mr. Mill, in detail, applies his general principle so as to bring out the worth of Christianity *as a supplement to Natural Religion*, even as there is an element of hope in Natural Religion beyond knowledge: "The indulgence of hope with regard to the government of the universe, and the destiny of man after death, while we recognize as a clear truth that we have no ground for more than hope, is legitimate, and philosophically defensible. The beneficial effect of such a hope is far from trifling. It makes life and human nature a far greater thing to the feelings, and gives greater strength as well as greater solemnity to all the sentiments which are awakened in us by our fellow-creatures and by mankind at large."† These and similar sentiments are a great contrast to the almost relentless tone with which, in some quarters, the hope of immortality is abandoned. Another benefit, "infinitely precious to mankind," "consists of the familiarity of the imagination *with the conception of a morally perfect Being*, and the habit of taking the approbation of such a Being as the *norma*, or standard, to which to refer, and by which to regulate our own characters and lives."‡ This, Mr. Mill holds, may be competent even to one who regards such a person as imaginary; but "religion, since the birth of Christianity, has inculcated the belief that our highest conceptions of combined wisdom and goodness exist in the concrete in a living Being, who has his eyes on us, and cares for our good."§ This benefit has been, and will be, derived, though the disciples of Christ have overestimated the absolute perfection of the Governor of the universe; and those who hold a mysterious limit to his power will be left all the more to indulge the supposition, which there is nothing to disprove, "that his goodness is complete, and that the ideally perfect character in whose likeness we should wish to form ourselves, and to whose supposed approbation we refer our

* "Three Essays," p. 236.
† Ibid., p. 249.
‡ Ibid., p. 250.
§ Ibid., pp. 250, 251.

actions, may have a real existence in a Being to whom we owe all such good as we enjoy."* Christians will be thankful to Mr. Mill for recognizing so far this benefit of Christianity, though they will hold that there is no inconsistency, while keeping fast to the absolute perfection, not of a problematical, but of a real God, in bringing in a limit to account for difficulties, through one attribute of God limiting another, or through God limiting himself by a self-assumed relation to creatures, or through limitation in a certain sense being connected with evil. Last of all, Mr. Mill finds the worth of Christianity *in the character of Christ*, which, though, as drawn by him, it contains statements to which all believers in Christ's divine dignity and highest mission must earnestly except, rises to a much higher strain than anything he has written before, virtually wiping out his own earlier criticisms in his Essay on "Liberty," and his Essay on "The Utility of Religion," and even recalling the celebrated portrait of Rousseau. "Above all, the most valuable part of the effect on the character which Christianity has produced, by holding up in a divine person a standard of excellence and a model for imitation, is available even to the absolute unbeliever, and can never more be lost to humanity. For it is Christ, rather than God, whom Christianity has held up to believers as the pattern of perfection for humanity. It is the God incarnate, more than the God of the Jews or of Nature, who, being idealized, has taken so great and salutary a hold on the modern mind—and, whatever else is taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left—a unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of his followers. The tradition of followers suffices to insert any number of marvels, and may have inserted all the miracles which he is reputed to have wrought. But who among the disciples of Jesus, or among their proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly

* "Three Essays," pp. 252, 253.

not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived, as they always professed that it was derived, from this higher source. What *could* be added and interpolated by a disciple we may see in the mystical parts of the Gospel of St. John, matter imported from Philo and the Alexandrian Platonists, and put into the mouth of the Saviour in long speeches about himself, such as the other Gospels contain not the slightest vestige of, though pretended to have been delivered on occasions of the deepest interest, and when his principal followers were all present; most prominently at the Last Supper. The East was full of men who could have stolen any quantity of this poor stuff, as the multitudinous Oriental sects of Gnostics afterwards did. But about the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality, combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision where something very different was aimed at, must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon the earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life. When to this we add that, to the conception of the rational sceptic, it remains a possibility that Christ actually was what he supposed himself to be—not God, for he never made the smallest pretension to that character, and would probably have thought such a pretension as blasphemous as it seemed to the men who condemned him—but a man charged with a special, express, and unique commission from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue, we may well conclude that the influences of religion on the character which will remain after rational criticism has done its utmost against the evidences of religion, are well worth preserving, and that what they lack in direct strength, as compared with those of a firmer belief, is more than compensated by the greater truth

and rectitude of the morality they sanction."* These approximations of Mr. Mill to Christianity are also the more remarkable, that they come from one who had not, like Strauss and Renan, any Christian training; and while Mr. Mill has not, any more than they, solved the problem of the origin of Christianity, his willingness to accept a supernatural theory, if it could be found, is also to be noted as what, after so long a period, shows a gleam of Butler more than a reflection of English Deism.

This lengthened review may now end in one or two reflections, which hardly require to be more than stated.

1. The *first* is, the changeful and fluctuating character of doubt and denial in regard to Christianity. To say nothing of earlier periods, what a various front has unbelief worn since the days of Lord Herbert! Almost nothing has been common but the rejection of the supernatural. Deism, pantheism, scepticism, atheism have all appeared by turns. If there has been a progress, it has been from negation to negation more extreme: Hobbes leading on to Hume, Voltaire to Helvetius, Semler to Strauss. The assailants of Christianity have reversed each other's procedure, making each other's denials their own premises. The most opposite views have been taken as to the validity of metaphysical principles, as to the authorship of sacred books, as to the meaning of Christianity, and the value of its separate parts. The most different moods of rejection have been exhibited, from superficial contempt to respectful, almost reverential, sadness. A whole generation, a whole century, disowns the spirit of its precursor, which, however, returns, if not in the mass, in solitary instances. Hence the oblivion into which so much of this literature has passed. There is no handing down here of the torch, for each period is strange to the other, and the last thing which it will do for it is to reprint its documents. Writers of this school have, as a rule, therefore, to dispense with the immortality, even in time, which they so often renounce beyond it. It is not true of them that in losing their life they find it.

2. The *second* reflection is, that Christianity has advanced in spite of all adverse argument. It was a great saying of Origen,

* "Three Essays," pp. 253–255. See also Appendix, Notes M and N.

in opening his reply to Celsus, that Paul, in speaking of separation from Christ, did not mention arguments among its causes. However lamentable in their own case, and injurious to others, the reasonings of unbelievers have not hindered, on a large scale, the progress of Christianity. They have often been the means of arousing zeal and of arresting declension. They have shamed into repentance, by their exposures, corruptions that needed such rough surgery; and the wound which has cleared the system has been turned into a blessing. Always, the Church has suffered more from the inconsistencies of its friends than the menaces and violences of its enemies; and the apologist has been less needed than the preacher of righteousness. Christianity has not been saved to us in Britain mainly by the arguments of Butler and Sherlock, but by the slow yet sure revival that began to spread over the whole English-speaking world; nor was Germany rescued from rationalism, in so far as it has been, merely by professors and theologians meeting negative criticism, but by the return of visible Christianity, and by the calling forth of prayer which has power with God. Here, as everywhere, faith has brought victory; and who that contrasts the fortunes and prospects of Christianity almost anywhere, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, with what they were in the last quarter of the eighteenth, can deny that Christianity has not only survived but overcome?

3. The *third* and closing reflection is, that Christianity is not promoted by changing either its type of doctrine or its style of evidences. Wherever it has survived the flood of scepticism, and flourished anew, its progress has been in direct proportion to its clear reassertion of its supernatural character. It was eminently so in connection with the Methodist revival in England, which sooner or later stamped on the whole of Anglo-Saxon Christianity the impress of such doctrines, centred in the New Birth, as were more faintly held before its advent; and in like manner, on the Continent, wherever Christianity has come with greatest power, it has not been in proportion as it has made a compromise with lingering elements of unbelief, but as it has cast them out. The very experience of Romanism and Tractarianism has been in the same direction; for it has been not merely their hierarchical or ritualist side that has given them strength against unbelief, but their meeting so far

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those wants of the soul which are rooted in the relation of man to the supernatural, and which only the supernatural can supply. It is equally the dictate of loyalty to Christianity and of faith in its destinies to hold fast to this supernatural point of view in the statement of its evidences. This does not involve the neglect of any historical lesson or experienced fitness, or any one-sided treatment of external or internal arguments. In the handling and proportioning of these much Christian wisdom will still be needful; and the lesson will constantly require to be remembered that Christianity is ever its own best witness. But this very consideration will rebuke any attempt to exclude any element of a sound apologetics, because it may happen for the time to be in disfavor. It is vain to get rid of miracles when the whole substance of objective Christianity, as based on the Incarnation, is miracle, and of subjective Christianity too, as resting on the mission of the Holy Ghost. It is vain to get rid of prophecies, when the whole of Christianity folds up in its bosom the greatest of all prophecies—its own final victory, with its glories and mysteries of heaven and hell. So it is vain to extenuate inspiration; for though inspiration is not the same with revelation, it must be so at least to the extent of conveying all its treasures. Wherever we can, by fair and legitimate interpretation, harmonize Scripture with history, with philosophy, with science, we are not only warranted but bound to do so, since all truth is one, and God requires us to display it unbroken. But we shall not succeed in this, or in overcoming the world, by a timid, deferential, and alarmist spirit, as if, in the face of alleged advances of human knowledge, the revelations of Scripture were waning in their light, and could not be too soon revised and conformed to other authorities. Here we may well borrow the manly and Christian confidence of Luther—

> "Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn
> Und kein'n Dank dazu haben,"

and strong in our faith in Him whose name is the "Word of God," and whose oracles of truth outrun the light and discovery of all ages, and have already put so many predictions of failure to shame, go on to meet the ever-expanding future with the undismayed assurance that it will but fulfil those "exceeding great and precious promises" which convey in their

sublimity the evidence of their eternal truth and faithfulness: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished."

APPENDIX.

Note A. Page 11.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AS ONE OF PROGRESS.

There is an impression in many quarters that the eighteenth century was barren and exhausted. This is the view of Mr. Carlyle, often stated by him with something like denunciation. Much as I value the opinion of this great writer, I cannot follow him here. There was, no doubt, much that was shallow and artificial, doomed to a just end, and much of what was professedly new was like old poison with a new label. But the century was also in many directions one of new beginnings. Not to speak of science, with the creation of modern chemistry and electricity; or of literature, where we see in Britain a simpler and purer succeed the Queen Anne period, from Cowper onward, and where in Germany the great names of Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe originate the modern age; or of philosophy, where Reid and the Scottish school rise to meet Hume, and Kant begins recent philosophy—even in the political field, to which Mr. Carlyle probably referred, there is a great start; for in India the British Empire is founded; the conquest of Canada makes the New World Anglo-Saxon, and not French; the wars of Frederick forecast the history of modern Germany; and the American Declaration of Independence comes forth with all its epoch-making influences, in the train of which, in part at least, stands the French Revolution. In religion, the great Methodist revival must be commemorated, affecting through Wesley and Whitefield both the Old World and the New, attended with kindred movements, such as the Secession and Relief in Scotland, and followed, ere the century ends, by the formation of the oldest of the great Missionary Societies. There is much besides in the eighteenth century; but these features are enough to redeem it from barrenness.

Note B. Page 36.

DUTCH EDITION OF GROTIUS'S "DE VERITATE."

I had long been convinced that there must exist somewhere a Flemish or Dutch edition of Grotius's "De Veritate," earlier than

the Latin. In the first sentence of his Latin work he speaks of the argument of the books, "quos pro religione Christiana patriæ meæ sermone scripsi." He also says that the work was in verse, "Versibus inclusi, quo rectius memoriæ mandarentur." Impelled by this distinct assertion, I sought, year after year, to find some trace of this work in all the libraries I had access to, but in vain. I only learned that it was likely to exist, if anywhere, in Holland. About five years ago, having a correspondence with the late M. Groen Van Prinsterer, I asked him if he could furnish any clew to this inquiry. He kindly sent me a copy of the work of his countryman, Dr. Wijnmalen of Leyden, "Hugo de Groot als Verdediger des Christendoms" (Grotius as an apologist), Utrecht, 1869; in the Appendix to which (I. and II.) there is a full account of the Dutch original of the "De Veritate," as (in III., IV., and V.) there are notices of the Latin and other translations. It here appears that from 1622 to 1728 no fewer than five editions of the Dutch work came out, and a new one so late as 1844. Wijnmalen also corrects some mistakes current as to the Latin editions, and shows that the first was issued in 1627 in Leyden, and the same year in Paris. With reference to the Dutch editions, with which we are here concerned, and limiting ourselves to the earliest, the notices are of extraordinary bibliographical interest. Of the first, in 1622, published soon after Grotius's liberation from prison, only two copies are known to exist—one in the possession of Dr. Wijnmalen, and one in the Royal Library at the Hague. In the same year two reprints (they can hardly be called editions) of the work appeared. These also are of singular rarity, and vary very little from the first, or from each other. One of these, which agrees with Dr. Wijnmalen's description, is in the library of the New College, Edinburgh. It is a small quarto, nearly all in black-letter, and bears the title "Bewys van den waren Godsdienst in ses Boecken ghestelt, by Hugo de Groot. Ghedruckt in't Jaer onses Heeren Duysent ses hondert, xxii." (Proof of the true Religion in six books, set forth by Hugo de Groot. Printed in the year of our Lord 1622).

On the other side of the title-page is the division of the books, which is the same as in the Latin editions—the first, of God and Religion; the second, of the Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion; the third, of the Credibility of the Holy Scriptures; and the last three against Heathenism, Judaism, and Mohammedanism. Then follows in Alexandrine rhyme an "Exhortation to Peace to all Christians," covering two pages; and the work itself, which is entirely in black-letter (with the exception of the summaries on the margin), follows, extending to 111 pages. The treatise is thus of considerable compass, since each page, as a rule, has forty-four lines, the verses being also Alexandrine, but so arranged that the first pair of rhymes have thirteen syllables, and the next pair twelve, all through. The verse is flowing, and, considering

the difficulty of the subject, wonderfully sustained. I only notice that Grotius, in his fifth book against the Jews, applies in a lengthened metrical paraphrase, the 53d of Isaiah to the Messiah, as he does in all the Latin editions, and in his "De Satisfactione" to the end—the only work in which there is any reference of Isaiah liii. to Jeremiah, and that with an ultimate reference to the Messiah, being his Commentary published after his death. It may be added, as stated by Wijnmalen, that the Dutch edition was translated both into German verse and into English. The German translator was the Silesian poet Martin Opitz, whose work appeared at Breslau in 1631. The English translator, whose work appeared in London, 1686, under the title "Hugo Grotius on the Truth of the Christian Religion, in English Verse," is unknown. The rare copy in the New College Library, after the work thus described, contains also in Dutch three other treatises by Grotius —one a collection of metrical paraphrases of the Ten Commandments, and other parts of Scripture, with prayers; another, a Dialogue between a Father on the Duty of Speaking Little; and the third, another Dialogue between Grotius and his daughter Cornelia on Baptism. These poems are, unlike the work on evidences, connected with a place of publication, "Delf;" and are earlier in date, the first being in 1621, and the two last in 1619. In conclusion, I have, for assistance obtained in consulting this volume and ascertaining these facts, to thank the Rev. James Kennedy, B.D., Librarian of the New College.

I have to add that through the courtesy of George Bullen, Esq., Keeper of the British Museum, I am permitted to say that, according to a careful examination by him, the oldest copy of the Dutch poem on the Evidences in the Museum is of the same date (1622) with that in the New College, and otherwise exactly resembles it, wanting, however, the other poems, which in the New College copy have "Delf" on the title-page. These, however, with others, are found in two later editions of 1648 and 1652 respectively, also in the Museum, and which only differ, as to the "Bewys" of 1622, in having each a new and distinct title-page. Mr. Bullen has discovered that Dr. Wijnmalen's idea that the English version of 1686 was made from the Dutch poem is unsupported. It is in the Museum; and is dedicated to the Honorable Robert Boyle, the versifier being unknown; but he founds on the Latin, and professes his ignorance of Dutch. The exact title of the work is "Grotius, his Arguments for the Truth of Christian Religion, rendered into plain English Verse. London, 1686." Of himself the translator thus speaks: "If this version appear dull and flat, I hope it will be considered that it is but a copy of a copy; and if I had understood the original Dutch poem, as I should have had more assistance to fancy, I know not but I might have offered here something more poetical."

Note C. Page 39.

HERBERT'S NOTITIÆ COMMUNES.

It is not possible here to go into a criticism of Lord Herbert's theory of knowledge in his "De Veritate," considered as a foundation of his Common Notions. It is enough to say that while he here and there anticipates on general metaphysical ground the conclusions of Kant, as also of the Scottish school, as has been recognized by Sir W. Hamilton, as to an *a priori* knowledge being the condition of experience, and as to universality and necessity being the marks, though, according to him, by no means the sole ones, of this *a priori* knowledge, his investigations in detail are incoherent and arbitrary in their results. He makes no attempt at all, in his "De Veritate," to establish his so-called *Notitiæ Communes* in religion by any critical process in the least resembling Kant's, or, indeed, by any other, but simply assumes and reasserts them, as having, and as alone having, absolute and primary truth. As they are thus not built upon any theory of pure reason, except by assertion, so are they equally (to use the language of Kant) removed from any postulation or deduction of practical reason; and thus, as left by Herbert, these notions are wholly unfitted, as a complete and closed group, to exclude the addenda (if needed) of revelation.

Note D. Page 50.

DID BAYLE FORMALLY REJECT CHRISTIANITY?

In his article "Pyrrhon," Bayle perhaps comes nearer than anywhere else to a formal rejection of Christianity. He says in the text, "It is with reason that Pyrrhonism is detested in the schools of theology;" and then, in Note B, he lays open, as he imagines, the inherent contradictions of the Christian system. It is true that he puts his objections into the mouth of one abbé, who is a philosopher, reasoning with another who is a simple believer; but there is a sympathy with the negative side which it is difficult to disguise. He arranges the difficulties first under the head of doctrine, and then of morals. The first contradiction is in the Trinity: "It is evident that things which are not different from a third do not differ from each other. This is the basis of all our reasonings, and on it we found all our syllogisms; and yet the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity assures us that this maxim is false. Invent as many distinctions as you please, you will never show that this maxim is not falsified by this great mystery." This strain is pursued in the second exception: "It is evident that there is no difference between individual, nature, person; yet the same mystery has convinced us that persons may be multiplied, without the individuals and natures ceasing to be

unique." The third shaft is levelled at the Incarnation: "It is evident that to make a man who is really and perfectly a person, it is enough to unite a human body and a reasonable soul. But the mystery of the Incarnation has taught us that this is not sufficient. Whence it follows that neither you nor I could be certain that we are persons; for if it were essential to a human body and a reasonable soul, united, to constitute a person, God could never make them not to constitute it; whence it follows that to them personality is purely accidental. Now, every accident is separable from its subject in divers ways; it is therefore possible for God to hinder us from being persons by these divers means, though we are composed of bodies and souls; and who will assure us that he does not make use of some one of these means to despoil us of personality? Is he obliged to reveal to us all the ways in which he disposes of us?" These attacks show Bayle's usual acuteness, though his last instance is hardly based on the law of contradiction, as his other two profess to be, and begs the question as to whether a personality of one kind may not, as a matter of fact, be conserved in a higher. The recoil from Christianity, however, is evident; and not, as in the two next particulars, which deal with the Eucharist and Transubstantiation, solely from Romanism. Nor is it necessary to follow him into his moral difficulties, which simply reiterate the inadmissibility of belief in a God who is so unlike a good man as to suffer evil when he could hinder it; though he also goes on to reject the Christian doctrine of original sin. Other Christian mysteries, such as the Atonement, Bayle does not here touch upon.

Note E. Page 65.

WOOLSTON'S IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH.

The place where Voltaire touches on Woolston is in his article on "Miracles," in his "Philosophical Dictionary," vol. vii. Having given an account of Woolston's views, and quoted some of his strongest language, he goes on to speak of his trial before Lord Chief-justice Raymond in 1729, and its results: "Woolston was put in prison and sentenced to a fine, and to give security for £150 sterling. His friends furnished the security, and he did not die in prison, as it is said in some of our dictionaries that are written at hazard [*faits au hasard*]. He died in his own house [*chez lui*] in London, after having pronounced these words: 'This is a pass that every man must come to' [*c'est un pas que tout homme doit faire*]," vol. vii., pp. 113–114. There are differences here between Voltaire and Lechler, the latter of whom, "Geschichte des englischen Deismus," pp. 294–295, makes the fine £150, while the security was as high as £2000—viz., for two securities £1000 each, or for four £500 each; and as Woolston could not procure this, he remained and died in prison. It was not the discord as to the

fine or security that struck me, but as to the liberation or death in prison; and I was convinced that Voltaire must have had some ground for his confident assertion, as he was in England when Woolston's writings excited universal attention. Accordingly, in 1872, I made researches in the British Museum, and found the following notice of Woolston's death in the *Daily Courant*, Monday, Jan. 29, 1732–33, No. 5244: "On Saturday night, about nine o'clock, died Mr. Woolston, author of the 'Discourses on our Saviour's Miracles,' in the sixty-sixth year of his age. About five minutes before he died he uttered these words: 'This is a struggle which all men must go through, and which I bear not only with patience, but willingness.' Upon which he closed his eyes and shut his lips, with a seeming design to compose his face with decency, without the help of a friend's hand, and then he expired." Here nothing is said of the place of Woolston's death, but the expression quoted shows the accuracy of Voltaire's knowledge. I found also in the British Museum a short life of Woolston, evidently prepared by a friend, and bearing this title, "The Life of Mr. Woolston, with an Impartial Account of his Writings. London: printed for J. Roberts at the Oxford Arms, in Warwick Lane, 1733." It bears the name of no author; but it connects itself with the obituary in the *Daily Courant* by giving Woolston's last utterance in the very same words, so that it is evidently from one of his friends. This pamphlet seems to furnish the means of reconciling the otherwise conflicting statements. "Mr. Woolston was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and to pay a fine of £100. He purchased the liberty of the Rules of the King's Bench, where he continued after the expiration of the year, through an inability of paying the fine" ("Life," pp. 15–16). But that this restraint was very moderate is shown by another passage, where "his own door" is spoken of, and a liberty of movement affirmed of others not likely to have been in severe durance: "While he was in the rules of the King's Bench he met with several insults from ignorant and wicked zealots. He was twice attacked before his own door by a fellow who struck him several times in his second assault, telling him that he had writ against his Saviour, and that he deserved such usage; but Mr. Woolston was rescued from him by a gentleman who chastised the man with a good beating" (p. 26). Again, that Mr. Woolston had a house, or at least something very different from a cell, is evident from this extract: "About half an hour before he died, he was sitting by the fire in the bedchamber, when he asked his nurse to help him to bed" (p. 29).

In harmony with the inference suggested by these extracts, I learned, on visiting the Old King's Bench Prison in Southwark, now converted into a prison for convicts, that there had been, in the days when it was used in part for the detention of debtors, a portion of the building, called the State-house, where they lived

at their own expense and enjoyed a considerable amount of liberty; and similar recollections of what the so-called "liberty of the King's Bench" allowed existed in the neighborhood, and on the part of others who could recall the state of the metropolis before later changes in our prison system. While, therefore, it is much to be regretted that Woolston should have suffered at all, there is, beyond the interest of these results as clearing up an apparently insuperable historical discord, the consolation of seeing that Christianity was not burdened in his case with any aggravated severity; and the life to which I have referred bears honorable testimony to the exertions of those who lamented this prosecution, and sought to abridge its penalty. This is especially related of Dr. Samuel Clarke. "Dr. Clarke, a short time before his death, began his solicitations at court for the releasement of Mr. Woolston, declaring that he did not undertake it as an approver of his doctrine, but as an advocate of that liberty which he had through his life defended. He looked on Mr. Woolston as one under persecution for religion, which he thought inconsistent with the liberties of England and with the doctrines of Christianity, and on this laudable principle he solicited the relief of the oppressed, but was hindered from proceeding in his virtuous design by death soon after Mr. Woolston's commitment" ("Life of Woolston," p. 17).

Note F. Page 74.

Warburton's "Divine Legation of Moses."

Though Warburton cannot come in as a special answerer of Morgan—for, as has been said, the chronology is against this, and he has answered at far greater length Shaftesbury, Collins, Tindal, and Bolingbroke—yet a work so celebrated as his "Divine Legation" may well receive a brief notice, all the more that he is one of those writers, overestimated in his own age and underestimated in ours, who belong to the permanent literature of this question, and who serve as landmarks of its variation and progress. Largely as his adventurous thought and vast reading were neutralized by paradox, he belongs still to the rare family of thinkers and critics who leave no question as they found it, and whose very errors provoke an agitation that extends the range of truth. Though he despised and even trampled on his opponents, it was more from controversial habit than from malignity, and the regret with which he often finds himself alone among the defenders of Christianity is a proof of his sincerity. He has failed in discovering a new proof of the divine mission of Moses, if he has not even endangered the common argument; but in the course of his long and various treatise he has suggested not a few traces of thought for which apologetics are richer and stronger.

The "Divine Legation of Moses" began to be published in 1738, and the second part came out in 1741. This comprised the first six books—all that ever appeared in successive enlarged editions in the author's time—the ninth book being inserted in his works by Dr. Hurd after his death. It provoked, as was inevitable, endless controversy, and a full summing-up of its results is perhaps a desideratum in our literature. The following notices are all that can be here afforded.

The method of Warburton is complicated by different syllogisms working into each other. But, as an argument, its force is reducible to one principle, that where a lawgiver does not use, or is not supported by, a belief in future rewards and punishments, their place must be supplied by an extraordinary Providence dispensing these sanctions in this life. The fact which he connects with this principle is that Moses made no use of a future state in his legislation; whence the conclusion is drawn that he was divinely supported, i. e., had his mission attested by a present supernatural Providence. Only a bold and daring mind could have seized on such a position, equally questionable in both its parts; but it is exactly here that the resources of Warburton's argumentation come to light; and while a common reasoner would soon have been driven to the wall, he prolongs a very copious and plausible argument, where the very involutions of the chain hide its weakness.

Nothing can be more interesting than the survey of the ancient religious history of the world, which is undertaken to show the extreme anxiety of lawgivers to impress truth in the form of national belief on their people's minds. But Warburton has failed to show that this went so prevailingly into the future as to make out the difference between Moses and other lawgivers. They used to a vast extent the present sanctions of religion as instruments of government; and much more of the life of the nation was apparently bestowed upon gaining the favor of the gods for its collective welfare in time than in inculcating truths as to the retributions of individuals in an after-state. Hence the whole of Warburton's interesting discussions as to the Mysteries, to say nothing of such private opinions as that these were reflected in the sixth book of Virgil or the Metamorphosis of Apuleius, come short of the mark. This failure is aggravated by what he says of the philosophers; for though, according to him, they all professed faith in future rewards and punishments, they all privately disbelieved this; so that it is not easy to see how in this case either they or the lawgivers found so much heart to profess or propagate it, or how, with so many influential elements of scepticism abroad, they could have been so well rewarded by popular credulity. This makes it hard to create a precedent in the matter, which Moses was bound on ordinary principles to follow; and then, even had all the other lawgivers been united in using the sanctions of the future, Warburton is hardly able, even granting that Moses saw all this

kind of statecraft in Egypt, to shut up Moses, as a reason for neglecting it, to the one alternative, that he had a miraculous Providence ready at hand; for Moses might simply mistake, thinking that he could govern without either future sanctions or a present extraordinary Providence: or some other reason, in the unknown possibilities of human motive, might have accounted for his course. Therefore, even if the other lawgivers here left Moses so relatively weak, it would only be an hypothesis that he had a better strength at his disposal; it could not be a proved conclusion.

The other premise of Warburton's main argument, the minor, is left by him in an equally unsatisfactory state of proof. Much, no doubt, looks at first sight in Warburton's favor. The future in the Jewish horizon shows a blank, so far as legislation is concerned. But Warburton hardly seems to have considered how far such a belief, as he grants Moses personally had, in a life to come, needed to come in as the sanction of laws; for, in avowedly Christian governments (whatever may be made of ancient lawgivers) it does not, and a theocracy had so far to govern upon temporal principles. And he seems equally to have underrated the belief, unexpressed and inexpressible in legislation, which so far coexisted with it from the beginning, and, as Warburton himself grants, came out in the prophets and later Jewish literature. Such admissions as he makes ("Divine Legation," v., p. 423, "What will follow? that Moses taught a future state—the proposition I oppose? No; but that *from Moses and the prophets together* a future state might be collected—a proposition I have no occasion to oppose") might have led him to estimate more favorably the later dawn, whereas the negative spirit of his criticism pursues him even here. All the later notices of immortality in the Old Testament are reduced to a minimum. The very prophets have hardly one clear utterance quoted; the Psalms, which have so wonderfully stretched out, so as to adapt themselves to the fullest Christian hopes of the vision of God, he draws back to mere earthly communion; and his strange theory of Job, that it sets forth the adversities of the Jewish people on their return from the Captivity, naturally only ends in his interpreting the words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth" (words which even Ewald connects with immortal hope), in the exclusive sense of national deliverance. It only remained to have struck away the New Testament assertions as to earlier knowledge of a future life, such as our Lord's argument with the Pharisees, "God is not the God of the dead," etc., and his parable of the rich man and Lazarus possessing in the writings of Moses and the prophets something equal to a voice from the dead; and, if possible, more decisive, the 11th of the Hebrews. But Warburton will not deny this evidence, though he limits the hope of a better country to the "patriarchs and leaders of the Jewish people" (v., p. 432). But when so much is granted, the residue becomes a vanishing quantity, and the log-

ical support of an extraordinary Providence is indefinitely weakened. So much of hope in the older Jewish mind as was sufficient to generate, or to harmonize with, that later expectation (before Christ) which Warburton grants, is too much for his scheme; and hence he instinctively evacuates every brightening promise, and, against his own better nature, verges here to rationalism in order to support Christianity.

It has often seemed to me, however, that this great writer could not be altogether mistaken, and that there is an element of truth in this remarkable treatise. There is a common principle in a present extraordinary or miraculous Providence, and in a future life. Each is a form of the supernatural; and hence the one can do the work of the other. The one can even be a revelation of the other, suggesting it, and rousing up the latent idea of it that is in the mind. Our Saviour has taught us that the presence of the living God is the suggestion of immortality. The soul in that atmosphere cannot shake off the idea, if God be friendly, nor even if he be hostile. And what is true of the realization of God, as bringing with it the sense of immortality to his moral creatures, is still more manifest of God, acting in a miraculous way, and as it were coming nearer than before. Hence the Israelites did not need the verbal revelation of immortality, as it might otherwise have been granted; for it was given in his awful nearness and mighty as well as gracious works. Whatever dimmer truth they may have otherwise had was thus vitalized. This seems the permanent element in Warburton's speculations; but the extraordinary Providence was not so much the substitute of a future life as its vehicle and its illumination. Nor could the presence of the one be argued from the absence of the other; but from the presence of the one a virtual conjunction of both.

Note G. Page 113.

RELATION OF ROUSSEAU TO CHRISTIANITY.

The question has not been very fully discussed, what was Rousseau's true relation in point of belief (conduct is not in question) towards Christianity. This is by no means without its difficulties. He loudly complained of the injustice of the semi-rationalist clergy of Geneva, who could not tell whether they themselves were Arians or Socinians, in denying him the Christian name. But for this he was largely himself to blame. Whatever saving clauses he had inserted in connection with the creed of the Savoy vicar, this could not abate the impression made by the fact, that he had chosen such a person for his spokesman on religion, and, still more, that, after the sublime passage on the character of Jesus, he had brought in the disappointing sentences: "With all this, the same gospel is full of things incredible, of things repugnant

to reason, and which it is impossible for any man of sense to conceive or admit. What are we to do in the midst of all these contradictions? It is your duty, my child, to be always modest and circumspect; to respect in silence that which we can neither reject nor comprehend, and to humble ourselves before the great Being who alone knows the truth" (Œuvres, ix., pp. 117, 118).

It was unfair, therefore, in Rousseau to expect that passages like this, and the others in which the vicar dissects the external evidences of Christianity, would be set down to the mere *mise en scène* of an orthodox priest, depressing other arguments to exalt the final testimony of the Church; for it rather looked like the creed of a doubter among the clergy, such as was then too common.

It must be confessed, however, that the Letter to the Archbishop, and still more the Letters from the Mountain, retrieve Rousseau's position, and distinguish him very greatly from the school of Voltaire. It is true there is much that is sadly disappointing still. He has no just conception of the stupendous importance of the doctrinal side of Christianity, as he sees in the Reformation in Geneva and elsewhere no body of vital truth, but only a right of every man against Rome to assert his private judgment. The argument from miracles he wholly sets aside; for while he does not deny that our Lord and others may have wrought them, he cannot find criteria by which to distinguish them from extraordinary works of nature, or even of evil beings, so that they are not helps but obstacles of faith. No one, perhaps, has stated these objections with more force or acuteness; but he is the victim here of his own ingenuity; for the Bible miracles do not, by any progress of research, tend more to be reduced to natural phenomena, and the cures, for example, of Jesus—after a hundred years of wonderful medical discovery—do not in the least admit, more than in Rousseau's days, of scientific explanation. But, abating this grave defect, and the necessary lowering which it involved of Christ's supernatural mission and character, there is in Rousseau a strenuous assertion of faith in the moral character and claims of Jesus as *sui generis*, and in the self-evidencing power of the Bible to convey itself as a revelation, without extraneous arguments. The following extracts will make these points clear. *First*, Rousseau appeals to what he had said in his "Émile," and said, doubtless sincerely, regarding the character of Jesus Christ, as retaining its force, in spite of his inability to use the argument from miracles: "I declare myself a Christian; my persecutors say that I am not. They prove that I am not a Christian because I reject revelation; and they prove that I reject revelation because I do not believe in miracles. But, to make this consequence just, one of two things would be requisite: either that miracles were the only proof of revelation, or that I rejected the other proofs equally. Now, it is not true that miracles are the only proof of revelation; and it is not true that I reject the other proofs, since,

on the contrary, they are found established in the very work in which they accuse me of destroying revelation" ("Letters from the Mountain," vol. x., p. 252).

Second, He reaffirms the self-evidencing power of the Christian morality. "The first, the most important, the most certain of these characters is derived from the nature of the doctrine, that is to say, from its utility, its beauty, its holiness, its truth, its profundity, and all the other qualities that can announce to man the instructions of the Supreme Wisdom and the precepts of the Supreme Goodness. This character, as I have said, is the most sure, the most infallible; it carries in itself a proof that dispenses with every other; but it is less easy to verify (*constater*); it demands, to make it felt, study, reflection, knowledge, discussions which only pertain to wise men (*hommes sages*) who are instructed and know how to reason" ("Letters from the Mountain," vol. x., pp. 248, 249.

Third, He states fully the immediate testimony of the Bible to its own divinity. This is in the Letter to Archbishop de Beaumont, who had in his pastoral used expressions against which Rousseau protests. These are given in italics. "*Nevertheless the author does not believe, but as the result of human testimonies.* Monseigneur, you are deceived. I recognize [the authenticity] as the result of the gospel itself and the sublimity which I see in it without any attestation. I have no need for any one to affirm the existence of the gospel, when I hold it in my hands. *It is always men who report to him what other men have reported.* Not at all; they do not report to me that the gospel exists; I see it with my own eyes; and if all the world was to maintain that it did not, I should know well enough that the whole world lied or was deceived. *Men between God and him!* Not even one. The gospel is the piece that decides; and that piece is in my hands. However it has come there, and whoever its writer, I recognize in it the Divine Spirit: that is as immediate as it can be; there are no men between that proof and me; and in the sense in which there would be, the historic side of this holy book, of its authors, the time when it was composed, etc., belong to the discussions of criticism, where the moral proof is admitted. Such is the answer of the Savoy vicar" ("Letter to M. de Beaumont," Œuvres, vol. x., p. 115).

These passages perhaps exhibit the character of Rousseau's creed as stronger than has been generally admitted; and with another extract from his letter to M. de Beaumont, in which he explains the unhappy addendum to the eloquent passage on the character of Christ (given in the beginning of this note), the discussion may be ended. "On the feeble authorities given for the gospel, he would reject it for the reasons above indicated, if the Divine Spirit which shines in the morality and in the doctrine of the book did not restore it all the force which human testimony

wants on such a point. He admits, then, this sacred book, with all the admirable things which it contains, and which the human mind can understand; but as for the things incredible which he finds there, '*things repugnant to reason, and which it is impossible for any man of sense either to conceive or admit, he respects them in silence, and humbles himself before the great Being who alone knows the truth.*' Such is his scepticism, and it is involuntary, being founded on reasons, invincible on one side and other, and which force the reason to be in suspense. This scepticism is that of every Christian, reasonable and of good faith, who does not wish to know things of heaven, other than he can comprehend, other than bear on his conduct, and who, with the apostle, rejects *foolish and unlearned questions, and those that gender strifes*" ("Letter," etc., Œuvres, vol. x., pp. 117, 118).

Note H. Page 134.

DOCTRINAL CREED OF EICHHORN.

No words can, so well as their own, give my readers an adequate idea of the extent to which, in the case of men like Eichhorn, the tone of Christianity had been lowered. Hence I shall translate the passage, with which his third and last volume of the "Introduction to the New Testament" begins in speaking of Jesus and his apostles.

"When Jesus parted from his disciples, his doctrinal system was only present in faint outlines. He had taken for granted the doctrines of God, Providence, and Immortality, simply as general principles, without proving them, or showing their connection with the universal sense of truth. He had exhibited God as the ideal of holiness, and as the model after which men were incessantly to strive, and the moral law as a divine precept, in the following of which the condition of divine favor and of happiness was to be fulfilled. With the credit of a divinely commissioned teacher, he presented only results, without, at the same time, laying open what followed for individual faith and practice. Neither the nature of the human mind, nor the capacities of his first scholars, nor the duration of his ministry, allowed Jesus to exhaust everything. The weak eye must be accustomed gradually by single rays to the light; the uneducated must by tedious and partial communication of the first elements of better knowledge be made capable of it; and in the illumination of the mind, the spirit of the age must be taken into account. What Jesus could not himself perform, qualified men, his scholars, must, after his example, take in charge. What was given by him at first in individual instances they needed to reduce to general principles, and bring to light the inward and spiritual wealth therein concealed; they must accompany with proofs the leading doctrines of Chris-

tianity as its founder took them into his system; and when to give these proofs surpassed the powers of men, to represent the doctrines as a piece of rational faith; what Jesus had left dark, that they were to make clear; what he had left indefinite, that they were to define; the blanks left by him to fill according to the spirit of his teaching; and thus they were to bring out of concealment the full light which Jesus had made only faintly to glimmer in his discourses; and to teach without disguise that the spirit of Christianity was quite irreconcilable with that of Judaism, and that the one must entirely separate itself from the other. Christianity thus needed for the development of the great principles that lay in it, and for their adequate working-out, men of talents, of acuteness and inventive power, of independence and mental boldness. Among the first advocates of Christianity, whose writings we possess, John and Paul were, in these respects, the most distinguished" ("Einleitung in das Neue Testament," vol. iii., pp. 1, 2).

Note I. Page 150.

THE ALLEGED PANTHEISM OF LESSING.

Our chief if not sole authority for the conversion of Lessing to pantheism is the well-known philosopher F. H. Jacobi, who afterwards rose to such distinction as the opponent of the Absolutist systems of Schelling and Hegel, and as the defender of views more akin to the natural realism of the Scottish philosophy. The facts as to Lessing occur in the work of Jacobi "On the Doctrine of Spinoza" ("Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza," Breslau, 1789). They amount to this, that when Lessing died, Mendelssohn naturally thought of writing his life. Jacobi, fearing that the intended biographer might not be aware of the change which, as he himself judged, had passed upon the views of Lessing, briefly communicated to him the conviction he had reached. Mendelssohn received the tidings with incredulity, and gave some hint that he regarded the impression, which Jacobi had founded on personal intercourse with Lessing, as due only to the extraordinary power of *persiflage* which the latter possessed. Jacobi, roused by this challenge, entered into a long statement and criticism of the doctrine of Spinoza, to show that he was a competent witness on such a point, and also detailed the evidence on which he credited Lessing with adopting such a scheme. This rested on conversations with Lessing, held in the year 1780, when Jacobi had come to Wolfenbüttel to meet him. On the morning after Jacobi's arrival, he had given Lessing to read an early poem of Goethe, "Prometheus," in which Jupiter is defied, worship of him renounced, and faith only left in an Almighty Time and Eternal Fate, which had made all things. Jacobi, expecting to find

Lessing dissatisfied, was surprised to hear him say, "It is my own point of view. The orthodox ideas of the Deity are no longer for me; I cannot enjoy them, Ἓν καὶ πᾶν. I know nothing else. That is the upshot of the poem, and I must confess I like it very well. JACOBI. Then you will be tolerably agreed with Spinoza? LESSING. Were I to take any name, it would hardly be any other. JACOBI. Spinoza is for me good in his way; but it is a poor salvation that we find in his name. LESSING. Yes, if you will have it so. . . . And yet . . . Do you know anything better?" ("Ueber die Lehre," etc., p. 22). Next day, and several days afterwards, the conversation was renewed, Jacobi, among other things, telling Lessing that he had come to seek help from him against Spinoza, and the latter replying that there was no other philosophy worthy of the name; while Jacobi still maintained that, however much he had learned from him, especially as to the inadmissibility of reasoning and logical deduction when applied to ultimate beliefs, he found it necessary to escape from him, and reach the "world of faith by a kind of *salto mortale*, so as to rest in final causes and free-will." The end of a conversation is all that needs to be farther here quoted: "LESSING. Well, very well; I can turn to good account all that you say; but I cannot go along with you in reaching your result. I like your *salto mortale* not amiss; and I understand how a man with a head may prefer this head-over-heels leap to get out of a fix. Take me along with you, if it be possible. JACOBI. If you will only mount the elastic springboard that drives me on, the thing is done without more difficulty. LESSING. Yes, but even then the leap in the air would be required; and for this I can no longer trust my aged limbs and my heavy head" ("Ueber die Lehre," etc., p. 44). Such is this curious revelation; and it may be added that, while subsequent research and criticism have hardly assigned to it the decisive weight which Jacobi ascribes, it confirms the impression otherwise gained of Lessing's inward unsettlement, and of his tendency, in his own language, to put systems together only to tear them in pieces. This question is discussed in Mr. Sime's able work on Lessing, vol. ii., p. 303.

NOTE K. Page 168.

A CRITICAL THEORY OF THE GOSPELS NECESSARY TO A LIFE OF CHRIST.

THE demand made by Baur upon Strauss, and referred to in the text, that a professed life of Christ, mythical or historical, must be accompanied by a theory of the Gospels, seems so reasonable, and has been so generally accepted by scholars of all classes, Strauss included, that it is rather surprising to find it evaded in the well-known and able work "Ecce Homo." This volume,

while opening out fresh and interesting points of view, and separating itself by a wide interval by an avowed belief in the miracles of Christ, from the French and German authors that support the standard of rationalism, has generally been held to fail in maintaining silence as to the true rank of Christ's person; nor do the author's explanations in justification of his reserve, as given in the Preface to his fifth edition (London, 1868), appear to remove the difficulty. But it is, if possible, more remarkable that he should discuss his topic without stating any theory as to the age or genuineness of the Gospels, their relation to each other, and their historical authority. On this subject, also, in the same preface, he has offered an explanation which will probably be as little accepted; it is to the effect that his book contains no "criticism of documents," because the author finds a "rudiment of certainty" "in the consent of all the witnesses;" and accordingly he takes the Gospel of Mark as the basis of certain propositions which, "unanimously attested," are numerous enough to afford an outline of Christ's life sufficient for his purpose.

Now, it will probably be felt, even should the induction from Mark be accurate, and the evangelic agreement so far allowed, that this procedure is too slight and summary in a case where the author himself admits that the veracity of his witnesses "has been strongly impeached by critics, both on the ground of internal discrepancies and of the intrinsic improbability of their story." It does not seem possible, without more inquiry, "to form a rudimentary conception of his [Christ's] general character and objects" "while the vexed critical questions remain in abeyance." The mere agreement of four professed historians, up to a certain limit, is no certain basis of history, as all now admit in regard to the consent of writers as to the early years of Rome. Hence our author fortifies his position in the outset by simply assuming of the four evangelists that they, "in probable nearness to the events they record, and means of acquiring information, belong to the better class of historical witnesses." This will be readily admitted by those who believe already the minimum extracted from the four Gospels; but only on the ground of critical inquiries such as the author has not entered into. By others, till the evidence of age, genuineness, and early reception in the case of the Gospels, and especially of competency on the part of their authors, has been made out, the mere agreement as to Christ will have no weight whatever—unless as derived from the wonderfulness of the character—or, at best, only as presumption of truth. The work, therefore, of the author of "Ecce Homo" hangs in the air, or rests on an assumption which in this critical age is hardly safe or desirable.

Besides, while it may be granted that with approved historians a certain minimum is established by their consent, it is not considered true to history, or the best way of gaining real insight, to

leave out all that is not common to all narrators. Socrates could not be thus understood, nor Luther, nor Samuel Johnson. Even Renan cannot write the life of Christ without drawing on the fourth Gospel, and justifying it by critical researches. The facts would become, on this principle of unanimous agreement, well or ill attested, as the historians diminished or multiplied; for the minimum of agreement would be less with eight than with four. This is therefore an uncritical principle; and, though it may seem to open an easy escape, cannot warrant us to dispense with a critical theory of the Gospels, and an effort, not to sink the differences of the evangelists, but to harmonize them and to incorporate them into one history.

Note L. Page 172.

THE QUARREL OF STRAUSS WITH RATIONALISM.

It cannot be denied that Strauss has done service in illustrating, both by argument and example, the ultimate tendencies of rationalism. His complaints against its prevailing indecision and halting between opinions are one of the most characteristic features of his style. The only great exception is his justification of the compliances of Reimarus with all the Christian professions and usages which his Deistic creed excluded. But, ordinarily, Strauss strikes a bolder note of rebellion against conventionalism and compromise, sounding through the ranks of doubt and negation, "To your tents, O Israel!" This is the spirit in which he condemns Ewald, Hase, and even Baur (the stroke would also have fallen on Keim), for their ambiguities in regard to the resurrection of Christ; and in the same strain he denounces all the practical efforts of German Liberals to found a church in which Christ shall have still a name, but Reason be the pontiff and dictator. "From this prejudice [that a visible religion is still needed] comes all our bungling with the Old Church, all the sewings and stitchings of our mediating theology. In Lessing's days, it was Revelation and Reason that needed to be harmonized; now men prate of the modern problem 'of reconciling liberal culture with Christian piety.' The attempt is not in the least more rational or practicable than in the time of Lessing. We come to this at last; if the old faith was absurd, so is the modernized, that of the *Protestanten-Verein*, and of the Jena Declarationists, and that in a twofold and threefold degree. The old Bible faith only contradicted reason, but not itself; the new contradicts itself in all its parts; how, then, can reason be on its side? The most consistent procedure is that of the Free Congregations—so called—that stand quite outside of dogmatic tradition, on the ground of rational thought, natural science, and history. That is, no doubt, firm ground, but no ground for a religious society. I have repeatedly attended the service of

the Free Congregation in Berlin, and have found it terribly dry and unedifying. I sighed usually for some allusion to the Bible legend or the Christian year, to gain something for fancy or heart, but the refreshment was denied. No. This will not do. After one has carried off bodily the church building, to hold upon the bare and naked site an open-air conference is mournful to ghastliness. Either all or nothing. As a rule, the founding of such societies is more the work of ministers, who, having broken with the churches, want to keep up some semblance of spiritual function, than due to any need of laymen, who, when estranged from the Church, rather give up religious service altogether" ("Der alte und der neue Glaube," pp. 297, 298).

Note M. Page 189.

JOHN STUART MILL'S LAST WORD ON THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

There is an undoubted progress in Mr. Mill's views of the character of Christ, at least as summed up in accepting Christian morality, beyond what appeared in his essay on "Liberty." There, no doubt, he was careful to guard himself by distinguishing between the morality of the Church and that of its Founder. The charges of passivity, asceticism, and other evil tendencies, he directed rather against what Christianity became than against what it was meant to be. Still, he held strong language in regard to the defectiveness of "recorded deliverances" of Christ as summing up morality, though he granted (however mistakenly) that Christ meant these to be supplied from other quarters. He even goes so far as to charge on the Bible the absence of any rule as to public life comparable to the precept in the Koran, "A ruler who appoints any man to an office, when there is in his dominions another man better qualified for it, sins against God and against the State;" forgetful that this was included in Christ's golden rule, to say nothing of Paul's doctrine of magistrates being a terror to the evil and a praise to the good. Nor does he, in his estimate even of the moral teaching of Christ in its parts, rise to any of those warm utterances, in his essay on "Liberty," which break out even from Strauss, or go beyond general admiration. It is, therefore, all the more welcome to find in his last essay so strong and unqualified a recognition, which surely carries with it the sufficiency of Christ's "recorded deliverances" taken in connection with his life, and retracts what Mr. Mill had said, "that many essential elements of the highest morality are not provided for," and that other ethics "than any which can be evolved from exclusively Christian sources must exist side by side with Christian ethics to produce the moral regeneration of mankind" ("Essay on Liberty," pp. 19, 20. People's edition).

Few things are more striking than this tendency of the most competent minds in every age to unite, in spite of every other shortcoming, in rendering homage to the moral greatness and even completeness of the character of Christ; and here, though Mr. Mill has not reached, he has approached the unequalled tribute of Kant, who, when his own name was indiscreetly placed by his admirer and future biographer Borowski in too near conjunction with that of Christ, rebuked the act; and, speaking of the two names, said, "The one is holy; the other is that of a poor bungler doing his best to interpret him" (Namen, davon der eine geheiligt, der andere aber eines armen ihn nach Vermögen auslegenden Stümpers ist) ("An den Kirchenrath Borowski," 1792, vol. xi., p. 131. Rosenkranz).

Note N. Page 189.

Dr. Baur's sketch of Pauline justification.

How near the rationalist interpretation, when fair, may again approach the orthodox is seen in this striking passage, which contrasts strongly with the moral allegories of Kant and "virtue" of Mill: "What the 'works of the law' ought to have accomplished, but what 'our own righteousness' failed to achieve, must now, as the 'righteousness of God,' be worked by faith; hence what works wanted, faith must possess; but even faith by itself has not this reconciling power in itself; it is all that it is, only through the object to which it turns, and hence there must lie in the death of Christ that which makes it able to fulfil the end which the law with its works failed to accomplish. The apostle expresses most directly the relation of the death of Christ to the law in Gal. iii., 13—'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law,'" etc. . . . "This curse Christ has taken on himself, since he suffered death, the penalty imposed by law on the sins of men. . . . Man is thus free from the curse of the law. . . . This freedom is enjoyed by men, only in so far as Christ has died for them; but if he be thus dead, the reciprocal relation between him and them must come into consciousness and be recognized by them; they must, in order to appropriate what he has done, be able to know themselves one with him. This relation is faith; only through faith in him and his death on the cross for them are they free from the curse of the law; faith is thus the union of men with Christ, whereby the redemption from law by the death of Christ becomes individualized. . . . What the law could, through its constant non-fulfilment, not effect, the death of Christ effects by the setting-aside of the law—that is, without the law, but only in so far as that death is the object of faith. . . . The chief text in which this is more fully set forth by the apostle is Rom. iii., 21–26. Men 'are justified freely by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,' etc. Two points are here to be distinguished, which the apostle, in his view of the

death of Christ, considered as the object of faith, keeps distinct and illustrates by contrast. An act of redemption resting on the death of Christ is an act of the free grace of God, since men as sinners can only be justified by the grace of God; but in the death of Christ the righteousness of God has also revealed itself, which must make the guilt of sin be followed by its penalty. The righteousness of God must be satisfied in this way, that the penalty of sin is also really borne. Here, as De Wette justly observes, is a point of support for Anselm's theory of satisfaction; but it is not necessary to go beyond the idea of 'declaring' righteousness (ἔνδειξις) wherein there only lies, that God did not in himself and for the sake of satisfying his righteousness demand such a sacrifice for the actual payment of the penalty of sin, but only to show his righteousness to men; but this distinction in the last resort is unimportant; since what God does is not done for the outward end of a mere ἔνδειξις, but must have its objective ground in his nature. Since it was irreconcilable with the idea of Divine justice to leave past sins unpunished, Christ needed to die penally for the sins of men. It is not meant to be said that, in the nature of God, his judicial righteousness, his wrath against men, an obstacle opposed to the forgiveness of sin needed to be removed by Christ's death. God himself did not need to be first reconciled, and when the apostle speaks of a καταλλαγή, καταλλάττεσθαι, he at least does not mean such a reconciliation as would amount to a change of feeling towards men. . . . All that the righteousness of God demands in the death of Jesus can itself only be regarded as the efflux of divine grace. The declaring of righteousness in the death of Jesus could not have come to pass if God, before he showed himself the Righteous One, had not been the Gracious One, who gave the greatest proof of his grace in this, that he inflicted the penalty of sin, so far as for righteousness' sake it could not be spared, not on man himself, but on another in his room. This leads us from the idea of satisfaction to that which is most intimately connected with it, substitution. . . . This is most distinctly brought out in 2 Cor. v. 14, where the apostle, out of the statement 'One died for all,' draws the immediate conclusion, 'ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον.' We must not here think of spiritual death, as in Rom. vi. 2, or of an obligation to die literally; but it is said absolutely that what holds of one holds of all, and for this reason, as the article shows, that these are the definite πάντες; that is, those whose place the One assumes. Only as he dies in their stead, and for them, are they also dead—that is, so far as only the One is actually dead; but they all are in him ideally contained—can they, if not actually, yet really, because on account of him who is, in their room and for them, dead, be themselves regarded as dead. From the idea of substitution flows the double consequence, on the one hand, that the One, who must take the place of many others to act for them, is the same in nat-

ure with them; and, on the other hand, that he excels them in having that which they want, and the want of which makes it necessary that he take their place. If Christ have died for the sins of men, he must himself have been without sin, that his death, which could have been no sacrifice for himself, might stand as the penalty of the sin of many. Hence it is only the development of the idea of substitution in 2 Cor. v. 14, when in verse 21 the apostle says, 'God hath made him who knew no sin,' etc. . . . God made him *ἁμαρτία*, that we might be *δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ*— might be what we ought to be, in order to stand to God in the relation adequate to his idea. . . . This leads us back to faith. Faith is the subjective condition on which alone man can enter into the relation so expressed. . . . The Pauline doctrine must suppose as actual what in itself does not exist. Its *δικαιοῦσθαι* is no actual righteous being, but a mere righteous holding, or declaring, and faith, as the principle of this *δικαιοῦσθαι* is merely the firm apprehension, in view of Christ, that what exists not in itself nevertheless is. Not only has man most certainly, in 'justification by faith,' no cause of 'boasting,' as in 'justification by works' (Rom. iv. 1), but he has, at the same time, nothing in himself that could put him in the adequate relation to God demanded by *δικαιοῦσθαι*; for how could faith, as the mere opinion that something is as it ought to be, when the exact opposite is the case, have any instrumental power to bring about such a relation? This is the extreme point where faith, in the merely putative sense, as something without contents, seems to lose all reality; and yet the necessity lies clearly before us that faith, if it is to be the principle of *δικαιοῦσθαι*, must have the contents which shall first give it reality. Whence, then, shall faith get these contents? When the apostle (Rom. iv. 5) says that 'to him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,' he regards the faith that is so counted as 'righteousness,' as itself 'righteousness,' as the subjective condition of *δικαιοῦσθαι*: faith is as 'righteousness,' the moral quality under condition of which man can come into that adequate relation towards God which belongs to the idea of *δικαιοῦσθαι*. The moral element of faith can only lie in this point, that the believer, not according to Rückert on Rom. iv. 5, has the wish, though not 'righteous,' to become so, for that does not belong to this passage, but trusts in him that 'justifies the ungodly,' that the 'ungodly' is no longer such, but 'righteous;' yet how can he believe this without knowing the ground on which this faith rests? The ground on which this faith rests can only be Christ; but since the believer makes Christ the contents of his faith, that faith 'reckoned' as 'righteousness,' or the 'righteousness' existing in mere 'faith,' in it merely supposed or conceived, becomes a reality. One cannot believe in Christ without knowing himself one with him, and in this sense of oneness he is conscious of that as imma-

nent in his own consciousness, which forms the proper object of his faith in Christ. . . . His death is the reason why we, since we are now free from all the guilt of sin, can be the same as he is—without sin; and can, as righteous, stand in the same adequate relation to God in which he does" ("Der Apostel Paulus," pp. 537–547. Stuttgart, 1845). Though this extract from the leader of the Tübingen theology is not a model of clearness, it sufficiently recalls Luther to excite the hope that Christianity may be again revealed "ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν," and not as a system of morality, but of salvation.

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